LITERARY LEAVES

OR

PROSE AND VERSE

CHIEFLY WRITTEN IN INDIA

BY

DAVID LESTER RICHARDSON

SECOND EDITION

WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

CALCUTTA

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CALCUTTA:
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TO MRS. G. G. RICHARDSON.

MY DEAR AUNT,

ON THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THIS WORK I ADDRESSED IT TO ALL MY PERSONAL FRIENDS WITHOUT DISTINCTION, BUT I DEDICATE THE PRESENT EDITION EXCLUSIVELY TO YOURSELF. I FEEL ASSURED THAT YOUR KIND PARTIALITY WILL INDUCE YOU TO ACCEPT THE COMPLIMENT, SUCH AS IT IS, IN THE SPIRIT IN WHICH IT IS OFFERED—THAT YOU WILL DELIGHT TO DISCOVER THE MERITS OF THE BOOK, SHOULD THERE BE ANY TO REWARD THE SEARCH—AND THAT YOU WILL OVERLOOK OR EXTENUATE ITS MANY IMPERFECTIONS.

TO BE ABLE TO FLATTER MYSELF WITH THE HOPE, THAT IN PERUSING THE FOLLOWING PAGES IT WILL SEEM TO YOU AS THE RENEWAL OF A PERSONAL INTERCOURSE WITH THE WRITER, AND THAT, WITH ALL YOUR NATURAL GIFTS AND ELEGANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, YOU WILL DERIVE SOME LITTLE PLEASURE FROM HIS HUMBLE LABOURS, IS A GRATIFICATION THAT MAY EVEN ALLEVIATE THE PAIN OF ABSENCE.

THE YEARS THAT HAVE PASSED SINCE WE LAST MET, AND THE VAST WORLD OF WATERS NOW ROLLING BETWEEN US, HAVE HAD NO OTHER EFFECT UPON MY HEART THAN TO MAKE IT YEARN TOWARDS YOU WITH A MORE IMPATIENT AND IRREPRESSIBLE AFFECTION.

BELIEVE ME TO REMAIN,

WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT AND GRATITUDE,

YOUR FRIEND AND NEPHEW,

D. L. RICHARDSON.

COSSIPORE, JANUARY, 1840.

aim or interest to serve than the gratification of a generous impulse. But the mere honour of an intellectual intercourse with some of the finest spirits of the age is a fair subject of self-congratulation; and after every allowance shall be made for the warmth of compliment, I cannot help feeling that enough of commendation will remain to permit of my pleasing myself with the hope, that there may be something in the following pages not wholly unworthy of perusal.

Divided as I am, by such a dreary distance, from all personal association with the many gifted natures with whom I should be proud and delighted to be more intimately acquainted, it is a source of unspeakable gratification to me in this state of exile, that I am still able to continue even so imperfect an interchange of thought and sentiment as is afforded by epistolary converse; and whatever may be the fate of my humble literary efforts, I must always rejoice that they have met the indulgent eye of the persons to whom I venture to allude—that they have increased the list of my friends both here and in England,—and that they have whiled away many a weary hour with an innocent amusement.

A comparison of the present edition with the first would show that there are numerous additional verses and prose papers included in the one that were not inserted in the other, and that there is scarcely a single essay which is not in some degree enlarged, and I trust improved.

CONTENTS. VOLUME I.

PROSE.

VERSE.



ON LITERARY FAME AND LITERARY PURSUITS.

There is nothing more captivating than literary fame; and there are few men, who could resist its fascination if they thought it within their reach. It inflames the heart with a delicious poison. It excites a feverish thirst of praise that grows with what it feeds on, and too often destroys that healthy and tranquil tone of mind which is essential to genuine happiness. Of all human glory, it is the least allied to "a sober certainty" of enjoyment. It is generally attended with wild inquietudes, and a morbid sensibility to the strokes of fate and the mutabilities of opinion. The mariner, who trusts his life and fortunes to the treacherous ocean, regards not the varying winds of heaven with an anxiety so intense, as that with which the poet listens to the fickle voice of popular applause. The fame of the warrior occasions a comparatively temperate excitement. His exertions are chiefly physical; his achievements are palpable and defined; his honours are certain and immediate. All classes of men may judge with accuracy and precision of strength and courage, of victory or defeat. A gallant action is as warmly applauded and as fully appreciated by the artisan as by the soldier. Even the reputation of the statesman, though accompanied with greater care and perplexity of mind than the triumphs of the hero, is more open to general comprehension, and is less

connected with the profound and subtle workings of the soul than the glory of the poet. The claims of literary genius are so shadowy and equivocal, so reluctantly acknowledged by those best able to decide upon their truth, and so exposed to the misapprehensions of ignorance, and the wilful injustice of jealousy or caprice, that, as Pope feelingly observes, "the life of a wit is a warfare upon earth." To add to the bitterness of his misfortunes, the man of letters is of all men the least capable of battling with the world, and of supporting his influence by extraneous means. If his intellectual pretensions be disputed, he is helpless and forlorn. He ventures his whole cargo of earthly hopes in the frail bark of fame, and a wreck ruins him for ever. His habits of mind are incapable of change, and render him unfit for a new pursuit. Even when he is most successful, the public taste is so capricious and uncertain that he cannot, like the miser, count and hoard his acquisitions. No man can calculate the precise extent of his reputation. He cannot enter it into a ledger, and exult in his daily gains. The opinions of mankind are more variable and less easily understood than the state of trade. The pilgrim to Fame's distant temple pursues a doubtful path, and is "now in glimmer and now in gloom." He is like one who struggles through subterranean passages, and catches but occasional glimpses of the external light. Even when he gains the end of a perplexing path, and emerges into the full blaze of day, though dazzled for a while with excess of light, the freshness of the glory too quickly fades, and he pants again for new excitements. He has neither contentment nor repose. His wishes are boundless; his cares perpetual. He has a craving void in his heart that no glory can fill. The attempt to satisfy his desires is like pouring water into a broken vessel. The more he has the more he covets. His greatest gains are small in comparison to his hopes, that are like hollow things, only swelled the more by every breath of praise.

To be happy, therefore, he should effect that almost impossible triumph—a triumph over his own restless aspirations. "The man who would be truly rich," say Seneca, "must not enlarge his fortune, but lessen his appetite."

But even the painful difficulties of the pursuit of fame, and the unquenchable thirst for additional glory, are exceeded by the cares attending its possession. The fear of losing it, and the anxious charge of its preservation, keep the spirits in that eternal flutter and agitation, which joined to the effect of impassioned thought and a sedentary life often wears away the stoutest corporeal frame, and induces that pitiable state of nervousness and hypochondriasis so common amongst literary men. The clay tenement of a fiery soul is speedily destroyed.

It is unnecessary to explain in this place the reciprocal influence of mind and matter; for that reader must be dull indeed who should require an illustration of a fact so obvious; and yet many students of medicine are apt to overlook it in their practice, while they readily assent to it as a theory. M. Tissot, the celebrated French physician, (the friend of Zimmermann,) has left a work on the diseases of literary men of so philosophical and interesting a nature that it is surprising it should be so little known. An English translation was indeed published, many years ago, but it was never a popular work, and is now, I believe, extremely rare. It abounds with illustrations of the terrible effects of too much thought and emotion both on mind and body. The toils and anxieties of literature, connected with the peculiar sensibilities of genius, but too often end in insanity or death. Sterne has remarked, that "the way to fame, like the way to heaven, is through much tribulation." The witty Smollet, though a popular writer, has acknowledged the "incredible labour and chagrin" of authorship. He once fell for half a year, into that state of exhaustion which is called a *Coma Vigil*, an affection of the brain produced by too much mental exertion,

in which the faculties are in a state of stupor, and all external objects are as indistinct as in a dream. We learn from Spence, that Pope paid a similar penalty for over study; until he was at last restored to health by the advice of Dr. Ratcliffe and the friendly attentions of the Abbé Southcot. Many an immortal work that is a source of exquisite enjoyment to mankind has been written with the blood of the author—at the expense of his happiness and of his life. Even the most jocose productions have been composed with a wounded spirit. Cowper's humorous ballad of Gilpin was written in a state of despondency that bordered upon madness. "I wonder," says the poet, in a letter to Mr. Newton, "that a sportive thought should ever knock at the door of my intellects, and still more that it should gain admittance. It is as if Harlequin should intrude himself into the gloomy chamber where a corpse is deposited in state." In a late number of the *Quarterly Review* it was justly observed, that "our very greatest wits have not been men of a gay and vivacious disposition. Of Butler's private history, nothing remains but the record of his miseries, and Swift was never known to smile." Lord Byron, who was irritable and unhappy, wrote some of the most amusing stanzas of Don Juan in his dreariest moods. In fact, the cheerfulness of an author's style is always but a doubtful indication of the serenity of his heart.

The confessions of genius exhibit such pictures of misery and despair, as would appal the most ardent candidate for literary distinction, if it were not for that universal self-delusion which leads every man to anticipate some peculiar happiness of fortune, that may enable him to grasp the thorn-covered wreath of fame without incurring those festering wounds which have galled his predecessors or his rivals. The profession of authorship is more injurious even to corporeal health than the labours of the artisan, and is utterly inconsistent with tranquillity of mind. It induces an internal fever, and a glorious but fatal delirium. The seduc-

tive eloquence of Rousseau seems to gush from his heart like the sweet gum from a wounded tree. In the highly interesting pages of the elder D'Israeli, amongst many other illustrative anecdotes of a similar nature, are the following touching examples of the effect upon the mind and body of too much literary care and labour;—"Alfieri composed his impassioned works in a paroxysm of enthusiasm and with floods of tears. 'When I apply with attention,' says Metastasio, 'the nerves of my sensorium are put into a violent tumult; I grow red as a drunkard, and am compelled to quit my work.' Beattie *dared* not correct the proofs of his Essay on Truth, because he anticipated a return of that fearful agitation of the spirits which he had felt in its composition. Tasso, perplexed by his own fears and the conflicting criticisms of his friends, was anxious to precipitate the publication of his work, that he might be 'delivered from his agony.' Dryden, in a letter to his bookseller, in alluding to the illness of his son, pathetically observes, 'If it please God that *I must die of over-study*, I cannot spend my life better than in preserving his.' Cowley, 'the melancholy Cowley,' for thus he styles himself, confesses in one of his prefaces, how much he repents the sin of rhyme; and 'if I had a son,' says he, 'inclined by nature to the same folly, I believe I should bind him from it by the strictest conjurations of a paternal blessing.'"

Few literary men would wish their children to inherit their profession. Lord Byron, in his peculiar half-comic, half-serious style, expresses his regret, that he had become an author. "If I have a wife," says he, (see his journal of 1814,) "and that wife has a son—by any body—I will bring up mine heir in the most *anti-poetical* way—make him a lawyer, or a pirate, or—any thing. But if he writes too, I shall be sure he is none of mine, and cut him off with a Bank token." The writer of this article was once with William Hazlitt, when he received a letter from his son;—I inquired if he would wish him to follow in his father's

steps—"Oh! God forbid it!" was the quick and passionate reply. In a note to one of his Essays, he bitterly exclaims, "I am sick of this trade of authorship." Dr. Johnson, in the midst of all his fame, felt the miseries of a literary life, and sighed for the consolations of private friendship. While his name and his productions were the topics of general conversation, he shuddered at his "gloom of solitude," and in writing to Mrs. Thrale, he makes a touching appeal to her sympathy and tenderness: "I want every comfort: my life is very solitary and very cheerless. Let me know that I have yet a friend—let us be kind to one another." There is a querulous melancholy in the prefaces of Wordsworth that shews too clearly the state of his heart. The greatest of living poets has found that the wasps of criticism can destroy his repose, and that the neglect or ridicule even of the vulgar crowd is not always to be borne with a magnanimous indifference.

Literary pursuits and literary distinctions are often fatal to domestic pleasures and attachments. They render men less capable of entering cordially into those amusements that interest the mass of their fellow creatures, and often excite in their associates a bitter jealousy and an uneasy sense of inferiority. Some in the author see only the man, and wonder at the admiration of the world; while others in the man see only the author, and cease to regard him as a social being of the same nature with themselves. An author's station in society is always ambiguous, and liable to endless misapprehensions; he is like a stranger in a foreign land; he is *in* the crowd, but not *of* it. When his claims are too obvious to be disputed, the humble are alarmed at that superior intellectual power for which the vain and envious hate him. He is neither at his ease himself, nor are those about him. The jealous and the curious surround him like enemies and spies, and keep him ever on his guard. He can please no one. Some who are willing to admire, so raise their expectations of his

greatness, that he is sure to disappoint them; and the more he shines, the more he wounds the self-love of others. Even the most generous admiration is not of long endurance, but soon flags without repeated stimulants. If the literary man does not excel himself—if every new work is not superior to the last—his friends are disappointed, and his enemies triumphant. Even the greatest glory can hardly make a man indifferent to the ceaseless hostilities which it so inevitably excites. Envy and detraction are fierce and indefatigable adversaries, whom nothing but the downfall of the object of their wrath can entirely appease. The happiness of an ambitious author is at the mercy of his meanest foes. "Oh! that mine enemy had written a book," is a wish that has entered many a malignant bosom.

"Who pants for glory finds but short repose,
A breath revives him, or a breath o'erthrows."

A hostile criticism, however false or ignorant, often leaves an immedicable wound in the breast of genius. The tender and imaginative Keats was crushed by the rude hand of Gifford, and perished like a flower in a foreign land. The unhappy Kirke White never entirely overcame the shock of an unfavourable critique on his first productions. One bitter censure outweighs a thousand eulogies.

What with the jealousy of some men, the ignorance of others, and the capriciousness of public opinion, he who rests his whole happiness on literary fame must prepare himself for the life of a slave or the death of a martyr. And yet with all these fearful drawbacks, there is something so inexpressibly charming in literary pursuits and the glory that attends them, that no man who has once fairly enrolled himself in the fraternity of authors, can relinquish his pen without reluctance and retire into ordinary life. After the intense excitement of his peculiar hopes and labours, all other objects and employments appear "weary,

stale, flat, and unprofitable." Cowper quotes with a concurrence of sentiment the remark of Caraccioli, that "there is something bewitching in authorship, and that he who has once written will write again." "Who shall say," exclaims Bulwer, in his eloquent and interesting "Conversations with an ambitious Student in ill health," "whether Rousseau breathing forth his reveries, or Byron tracing the pilgrimage of Childe Harold, did not more powerfully feel the glory of the task, than the sorrow it was to immortalize? Must they not have been exalted with an almost divine gladness, by the beauty of their own ideas, *the melody of their own murmurs, the wonders of their own art?*" Dr. Johnson, with a truth and nature suggested by his own experience, attributes a similar feeling to the unhappy Prince of Abyssinia. Rasselas uttered his repinings with a plaintive voice, "yet with a look that discovered him to feel some complacence in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life, from a consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them."

The clear and permanent impression of the mind on a printed page is admirably adapted to the gratification of human pride. The author sees the image of his soul to the best advantage, and almost wonders at his own perfections. No youthful beauty contemplates her mirrored figure with more delight.

"'Tis pleasant sure to see one's self in print!"

He who has once passed into a book, while he exults in his own mental portrait, thus fixed as it were beyond the reach of fate, luxuriates in the anticipated admiration of the world. The printer's types are far more potent than the painter's pencil. The former represent the various movements of the mind—the latter gives the mere external frame, in one attitude and with one expression. There is additional pride in the consciousness, that in the production of the intellectual image the printer is subservient to the author's will, while we are necessarily as passive as

his canvass in the painter's hands. Our features are entirely at his mercy. We do not share the merit of his performance, though the subject is our own*.

We need not be surprised that even monarchs have been smitten with literary ambition, for satiated with the easy and vulgar influence of adventitious advantages, they naturally desire a species of power more personal and intrinsic, as well as more permanent and extensive. A great author has a wider kingdom and a longer reign than any sovereign upon earth. Shakespeare and Milton would scarcely have exchanged places with the proudest worldly potentates. The sun-lit pinnacles of Parnassus are more glorious than a gilded chair.

No man has so exalted an opinion of his own profession as an author. "Such a superiority," says Hume, "do the pursuits of literature possess over every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits the pre-eminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions." "An author," says Cowper, "is an important character. Whatever his merits may be, the mere circumstance of authorship warrants his approach to persons, whom otherwise

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* There is one advantage, however, in painting over printing, which is, that the productions of the artist are regarded with a deeper feeling of personal interest than those of the author; because there is no agent, like the printer, between the artist and his admirer. The work comes more directly from the man of genius himself, and the possession of it is more exclusive. There is something inexpressibly moving and delightful in the thought that the precious treasure is your own, and not the world's, and that it was literally and solely the work of the artist's fleshly yet inspired hand. We gaze at and touch the identical canvass on which that hand (perhaps long since mingled with the dust) once strenuously laboured, while we seem to hold direct communion with a being whose earthly glory is almost as imperishable as his spiritual existence. We drink in the loveliness of the same scenery that enchanted the painter's eye. We share in his enjoyment.

The personal interest in an original painting in some respects resembles, though it far exceeds, that which is excited by a celebrated person's autograph. But though a great author's manuscript may be highly interesting, it is of course in every sense less precious than a noble painting. A handwriting, though often in some degree characteristic of the writer's mind, can never be so essentially connected with genius as the work of a painter.

perhaps he could hardly address without being deemed impertinent." It is this proud feeling, linked to the hope of fame, that makes many an unhappy author persist so passionately in his favorite studies, amidst innumerable privations and inquietudes. "I know," says Drummond,

"That all the Muse's heavenly lays
By toil of spirit are so dearly bought."

But this difficulty and labour, as he himself confesses, in no degree restrained his ardour of composition. It is said that Milton would not desist from his literary avocations, though warned by his physicians of the certain loss of his sight. He preferred his fame to his comfort.

To create those mighty works that are meant for an immortality on earth is an object of exultation, compared to which, the dignities and triumphs of Kings and conquerors would seem valueless and vulgar. It is a proud and glorious thing, and may elevate our conceptions of the spiritual part of our nature, to know that the wealth of even one happy hour's inspiration may circulate, like a vein of gold, through the various strata of society, and enrich remotest ages! Even the utter extinction of his mortal being is an event of comparative indifference to the impassioned poet, who inflames his eager soul with the hope of a never-dying name, and the exalting thought, that he may stir the vast sea of human hearts, when the crowd of his contemporaries shall be utterly forgotten, and his own material frame shall have long mouldered in the grave. It is an aspiration of this glorious nature that swells the breast of Wordsworth, when he fervently exclaims;

"Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares—
The poets, who on earth have made us heirs,
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days!"

It is a mournful reflection that the poet's laurel is often steeped in tears, and that it acquires its richest bloom upon his grave. And yet if a great poet could anticipate his future fame, and enjoy its full influence and maturity in his life-time, his lot would perhaps be too dazzling for humanity to bear. If the mighty Milton could revisit the scenes of his earthly pilgrimage, glorified by his halo of eternal fame, he would be almost worshipped as a god. Mankind would prostrate themselves at his feet.

There is something so ethereal in the associations connected with poetic fame, that a personal intercourse with the bard himself is usually attended with surprise and disappointment. We forget the vast difference between mind and matter—the jewel and the casket. The mortal frame seems to dwarf the spirit. We see the soul dimly through so gross a medium. Authors, unlike other objects, grow larger as they recede into the distance; and their knowledge of human nature ought to suggest to them the imprudence of too near an approach to the common crowd. Their books are far more imposing than their persons. Fame is a complete abstraction, and even great men should remember the vulgar proverb, that 'familiarity breeds contempt.' We ordinarily observe, that if an author be more loved in his private circle than by the world, he is also less admired. The friends and associates of a man of genius are generally amongst the last to discover his intellectual greatness, and are usually surprised at his influence with the public, which they attribute to some unaccountable delusion. In private life the poet is not always poetical, nor the philosopher wise. In fact, the intense excitement of their intellectual habits renders them proportionably nerveless and relaxed in their domestic and social hours. They appear to a manifest disadvantage in society, because, while others abandon their whole being to more transient interests and less refined enjoyments, and concentrating such energies as they may possess upon the things about them, appear keen and animated, the man of

genius, wearied perhaps by the secret toil of thought, cannot wholly disengage his mind from the higher aspirations which still haunt and agitate it like a remembered dream. He is compelled from the fear of ridicule or misapprehension to check the natural workings of his mind, to avoid his dearest and most familiar topics, and to assume an air of interest in matters respecting which he is in reality indifferent. As in society he acts an uncongenial part, he is awkward and restrained, and cannot be expected to exhibit the same ease and vivacity as those who riot in their own proper element, and give expression to the genuine dictates of their hearts. It is only when men of genius meet with kindred spirits—when mind meets mind in sparkling collision, that their vast superiority to the crowd becomes marked and obvious.

The conversation of literary men, though it may turn on their favorite subjects, is not exclusive or *professional.* It usually involves the universal interests of humanity; and all intelligent persons, of whatever class, who have studied external nature, or the human heart, or have indulged in contemplations upon the mysteries of our being, may listen to literary men with sympathy and delight. They are not only accustomed to give a higher tone to their conversation, and to choose topics of more general interest than are introduced into ordinary society, but their habit of composition facilitates the perspicuous arrangement and expression of their ideas, and guards them from the ambiguity and the want of method which in the case of less practised thinkers often destroy the effect of the most important communications. In addition to this logical order of ideas and transparency of diction, which are characteristic of literary conversation, it is usually impregnated with a spirit and fervour that would seem utterly inconsistent with the frigidity of common intercourse. They who have once been accustomed to

"Such celestial colloquies sublime"

find it impossible to reconcile themselves to the vulgar truisms and smooth inanities of fashionable talkers, amongst whom a new thought or a pleasant paradox is as startling as a rocket, and interrupts their general harmony and their placid self-satisfaction. Literary men, therefore, are not fitted for society, nor society for them. Both parties are rendered uneasy by the connection, and the more the former confine themselves to the company of their own class, the better for themselves and for the world. The disrespect which so often attends the personal presence of an author may interfere with the influence of his works. His associates rarely look upon his published labours with that reverence which they excite in strangers.

This is the reason why literature is so little regarded in our "City of Palaces*." There is no such thing as fame in a small community. Men cannot easily imagine that those with whom they associate familiarly are much greater than themselves. When they see so much in the literary man that is common to all, and can only discover his superiority by an effort of abstraction, or by a reference to his writings, they soon cease to regard him with any peculiar interest. If they admire his works, it is usually with astonishment that any thing so remarkable should proceed from so ordinary a source ; but generally speaking, as I have already observed, the disrespect to his person is transferred to his productions.

In a vast city like that of London, the humblest literary man may acquire more real fame, however limited, than can be obtained in Calcutta by the most successful author. In England, when a man's productions are once familiar to the public, there is a vague and undefinable magic in his name that renders him an object of interest to his fellow-men. His person is shrouded in impenetrable obscurity, and they only catch his voice from out

* Calcutta.

the gloom. But in the metropolis of British India there is no public—no mystery—no fame;—the poet seems as prosaic as the coarsest utilitarian, and the man of letters has no more influence than the merchant's clerk.

It is imagined by some, that the lover of fame is so voracious of praise, that he is indifferent to its quality. This is not the case. The smiles of vulgar patronage, or the blundering eulogies of ignorance, are always offensive and disgusting. "I love praise," says Cowper in one of his letters, "*from the judicious*, and those who have so much delicacy themselves as not to offend mine." The applause of men who are themselves eminent in literature often thrills an ambitious author with that inexpressible delight which can never be occasioned by the adulation of common minds. When Lord Byron's high opinion of Sheridan's powers was communicated to that wild but sensitive genius he burst into a flood of tears. His joy overpowered him, and was far too intense to find relief in words*.

They who analyze their own feelings and the feelings of others, soon discover, that with various modifications, that mysterious law of our nature, which urges us to look even beyond the grave and anticipate the future, operates alike on all men. The love of fame still haunts us to the last.

"E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires†."

* See Lord Byron's Journal, published in Moore's Life of the Noble Poet.

† "A power above us hath instincted in the minds of all men an ardent appetition of a lasting fame. Desire of glory is the last garment that even wise men lay aside."—*Feltham's Resolves.*

There is a good passage on this subject in Fitzosborne's Letters. "Can it be reasonable to extinguish a passion which nature has universally lighted up in the human breast, and which we constantly find to burn with most strength and brightness in the noblest bosoms? Accordingly Revelation is so far from endeavouring to eradicate the seed which nature has thus deeply planted, that she rather seems, on the contrary, to cherish and forward its growth. To be *exalted with honour*, and to be had *in everlasting remembrance*, are in the number of those encouragements which the Jewish dispensation offered to the virtuous."

There is scarcely a being in the world, however humble, who does not pant for some kind of notice from his fellow-men ; and it is in proportion to the energy of his character and the power of his intellect, that a man is disposed to challenge attention by means more or less spiritual and refined. Some persons are contented with a reputation of which the nature and limits appear contemptible and narrow to more ardent minds, that would fain extend their influence over distant countries and through successive ages. But this thirst for sympathy, and applause, and power is so natural to all men, though infinitely varied in its intensity, that as utter annihilation is inconceivable by the human mind, they project their hopes of fame with their dearest human associations beyond their mortal life. It is not only a regard for the interest of survivors, which may cause us to be solicitous about our after-fame. Though a man were fully aware that he should not leave a single friend behind him who would be either injured or distressed by a cloud upon his memory, it would embitter his last hours if he thought that a stigma would attach to his name when he was no longer living to refute it. Yet the dull cold ear of death is no more sensible to the voice of censure than to the voice of praise.

This concern for our future reputation seems as instinctive as our hopes of a future existence, and a continued consciousness of earthly fame is not wholly inconsistent with our notions of happiness hereafter. A great author may perhaps be permitted, even in heaven, to rejoice in that "perpetuity of praise," which, as Milton proudly asserts, "God and good men have decreed as the reward of those whose published labours have benefitted mankind." He may possibly look back upon this mortal world with an affectionate greeting, and cherish a blameless exultation :—

> "Because on earth his name
> In Fame's eternal volume shines for aye !"

OCEAN SKETCHES.

Written on the voyage to India.

I.

[A BREEZE AT MID-DAY.]

The distant haze, like clouds of silvery dust,
Now sparkles in the sun. The freshening breeze
Whitens the liquid plain ; and like a steed
With proud impatience fired, the glorious ship
Quick bounds exultant, and with rampant prow
Off flings the glittering foam. Around her wake,
A radiant milky way, the sea-birds weave
Their circling flight, or slowly sweeping wide
O'er boundless ocean, graze with drooping wing
The brightly-crested waves. Each sudden surge,
Up-dashed, appears a momentary tree
Fringed with the hoar frost of a wintry morn ;
And then, like blossoms from a breeze-stirred bough,
The light spray strews the deep.

How fitfully the struggling day-beams pierce
The veil of heaven !—On yon far line of light,
That like a range of breakers streaks the main,
The ocean swan—the snow-white Albatross,
Gleams like a dazzling foam-flake in the sun !—
Gaze upward—and behold, where parted clouds
Disclose ethereal depths, its dark-hued mate
Hangs motionless on arch-resembling wings,
As though 'twere painted on the sky's blue vault.

Sprinkling the air, the speck-like petrels form
A living shower ! Awhile their pinions gray

Mingle scarce-seen among the misty clouds,
Till suddenly their white breasts catch the light,
And flash like silver stars!

II.

[A STORM—AT NIGHT.]

Yon cloud-arch spreads,—the black waves curl and foam
Beneath the coming tempest;—Lo! 'tis here!
The fierce insatiate winds, like demons, howl
Around the labouring bark. Her snow-white sails,
Outspread like wings of some gigantic bird
Struck with dismay, are fluttering in the gale,
And sound like far-off thunder. Now the heart
Of ocean quails to its profoundest depths;—
The dark heavens groan,—the wildly scattered clouds,
Like routed hosts, are thickly hurrying past
The dim-discovered stars. Up lofty hills,
Or down wide-yawning vales, the lone ship drives
As if to swift destruction. Still she braves,
Though rudely buffetted by tempest-fiends,
The elemental war. Ah! that dread wave,
As though some huge sea-monster dealt the blow,
Hath made her start and tremble!—Yet again,
For one hushed moment, with recovered power,
She proudly glides in majesty serene,
Calm as a silver cloud on summer skies,
Or yon pale moon amid the strife of heaven!

How terrible, yet glorious is the scene!
How swells the gazer's heart!—The mighty main
Heaves its stupendous mountains to the sky,
Their sides unruffled by the fretful waves
Of less terrific seas. The billows form
Moving Atlantic Alps, whose peaks alone

Are shattered by the wind that hurls the foam
Adown the dreary vales. In wintry realms
The viewless pinions of the northern breeze,
Thus shake the snow-wreaths from the hoary heads
Of everlasting hills!

An awful pause!—
Again the quick-reviving tempest roars
With fiercer rage!—These changes image well
The sullen calm of comfortless despair,
The restless tumult of the guilty heart!

III.

[A CALM—AT MID-DAY.]

Now in the fervid noon the smooth bright sea
Heaves slowly, for the wandering winds are dead
That stirred it into foam. The lonely ship
Rolls wearily, and idly flap the sails
Against the creaking mast. The lightest sound
Is lost not on the ear, and things minute
Attract the observant eye.

The scaly tribe,
Bright-winged, that upward flash from torrid seas,
Like startled birds, now burst their glassy caves,
And glitter in the sun; while diamond drops
From off their briny pinions fall like rain,
And leave a dimpled track.

The horizon clouds
Are motionless, and yield fantastic forms
Of antique towers, vast woods and frozen lakes,
Huge rampant beasts, and giant phantoms seen
In wildering visions only.

High o'er head,
Dazzling the sight, hangs, quivering like a lark,
The silver Tropic-bird;—at length it flits

Far in cerulean depths and disappears,
Save for a moment, when with fitful gleam
It waves its wings in light. The pale thin moon,
Her crescent floating on the azure air,
Shows like a white bark sleeping on the main
When not a ripple stirs. Yon bright clouds form,
(Ridged as the ocean sands, with spots of blue,
Like water left by the receding tide,)
A fair celestial shore!—How beautiful!
The spirit of eternal peace hath thrown
A spell upon the scene! The wide blue floor
Of the Atlantic world—a sky-girt plain—
Now looks as never more the Tempest's tread
Would break its shining surface; and the ship
Seems destined ne'er again to brave the gale,
Anchored for ever on the silent deep!

IV.

[SUN-RISE.]

The stars have melted in the morning air,—
The white moon waneth dim.—The glorious sun,
Slow-rising from the cold cerulean main,
Now shoots through broken clouds his upward beams,
That kindle into day. At length his orb,
Reddening the ocean verge, with sudden blaze
Awakes a smiling world;—the dull gray mist
Is scattered, and the sea-view opens wide!

—— The glassy waves
Are touched with joy, and dance in sparkling throngs
Around the gallant bark. The roseate clouds
Rest on the warm horizon,—like far hills
Their radiant outlines gleam in yellow light,

And o'er their shadowy range a thin scud floats,
Like wreaths of smoke from far-off beacon-fires.

The deep blue vault is streaked with golden bars,
Like veins in wealthy mines; and where the rays
Of Day's refulgent orb are lost in air,
In small round masses shine the fleecy clouds,
As bright as snow-clad bowers when sudden gleams
Flash on the frozen earth.
Ascending high
The gorgeous steps of heaven, the dazzling sun
Contracts his disk, and rapidly assumes
A silver radiance—glittering like a globe
Of diamond spars!

V.

[SUN-SET.]

Now near the flushed horizon brightly glows
The red dilated sun. Around his path
Aerial phantoms float in liquid light,
And steeped in beauty, momently present
Fresh forms, and strange varieties of hue,
As fair and fleeting as our early dreams!—
Behold him rest on yon cloud-mountain's peak,—
Touched with celestial fire, volcano-like,
The dazzling summit burns;—eruptive flames
Of molten gold with ruddy lustre tinge
The western heavens, and shine with mellowed light
Through the transparent crests of countless waves!

The scene is changed—behind the ethereal mount
Now fringed with light—the day-god downward speeds
His unseen way;—yet where his kindling steps
Lit the blue vault, the radiant trace remains,

E'en as the sacred memory of the past
Illumes life's evening hour!—Again! Again!
He proudly comes! and lo! resplendent sight!
Bursts through the cloud-formed hill, whose shattered sides
Are edged with mimic lightning!—his red beams
Concentrating at last in one full blaze,
Bright as a flaming bark, his fiery form
Sinks in the cold blue main!
The golden clouds
Fade into gray—the broad cerulean tide
A darker tint assumes. In restless throngs
Phosphoric glow-worms deck with living gems
The twilight wave, as Orient fire-flies gleam
In dusky groves,—or like reflected stars,
When evening zephyrs kiss the dimpled face
Of that far lake whose crystal mirror bears
An image of my home! Ah those white walls,
Now flash their silent beauty on my soul,
And, like a cheerful sun-burst on my way,
Revive a transient joy!

VI.

[NIGHT.]

The day-beams slowly fade, and shadowy night,
Soft as a gradual dream, serenely steals
Over the watery waste. Like low-breathed strains
Of distant music on the doubtful ear,
When solitude and silence reign around,
The small waves gently murmur.
Calm and pale—
A phantom of the sky—the full-orbed moon
Hath glided into sight. The glimmering stars
Now pierce the soft obscurity of heaven
In golden swarms, innumerous and bright

As insect-myriads in the sunset air.
The breeze is hushed, and yet the tremulous sea,
As if by hosts of unseen spirits trod,
Is broken into ripples, crisp and clear
As shining fragments of a frozen stream
Beneath the winter sun. The lunar wake
Presents to rapt imagination's view
A pathway to the skies!
In such a scene
Of glory and repose, the rudest breast
Is pure and passionless,—the holy calm
Is breathed at once from heaven, and sounds and thoughts
Of human strife a mockery would seem
Of Nature's mystic silence. Sacred dreams
Unutterable, deep, and undefined,
Now crowd upon the soul, and make us feel
An intellectual contact with the worlds
Beyond our mortal vision.

VII.

[LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.]

Profusely scattered o'er the fields of air,
Float the thin clouds, whose fleecy outlines dim,
Fade, like departing dreams, from mortal sight—
So gradually with heaven's deep blue they blend
Their paler tints.—
Now on the vessel's deck,
Luxuriously reclined in idle ease,
I mark the varied main. From either side
I gaze alternate, and strange contrasts find
Of light and shade. The scene divided seems.
Sun-ward, the noon-tide rays almost o'erpower
The ocean's azure hue, like glittering stars

Too richly on some regal garment wrought.—
I turn from fierce intolerable light,
And lo! the darker side a prospect shows,
On which the dazzled eye delights to rest;
For not a sun-beam glances on the sea.
The long blue waves seem, cord-like, twisted round,
And slide away, as if by viewless hands
Drawn slowly past. At intervals, far off,
A small and solitary breaker throws
A snow-wreath on the surface; and I hear
A low crisp sound, as through the glassy plain
The gallant vessel cuts her glorious way!

VIII.

[SUN-SET CHANGES.]

Behold that bridge of clouds!
Upraised beyond, an air-wrought precipice
Appears stream-mantled,—kindled vapours form
The radiant torrent, touched with every tint
That mingles on the vest of parting day.
Beneath that shadowy bridge the broad red sun,
Its outline undefined, continues still
The same celestial flood, that downward dashed
Breaks into fiery foam!
That scene is o'er—
The hill, the bridge, the stream have passed away!
The sun hath changed its hue, and now presents
A silvery globe, floating on fervid skies
That gleam like seas of gold. Its glorious disk
As if with insect-clouds thin speckled seems,
Yet glitters on the burning front of heaven,
Bright as a crystal spar, or quivering wave
Beneath the glare of noon!

IX.

[SEA-FOAM.]

The breeze is gentle, yet the gliding ship
Wins not her tranquil way without a trace,
But softly stirs the surface of the sea.
'Tis pleasant now, with vacant mind, to watch
The light foam at her side. Awhile it seems
Most like a tattered robe of stainless white,
Whose rents disclose a verdant vest beneath.
Then, suddenly, wild Fancy wanders home
For wintry images of snow-patched plains
That prove a partial thaw. E'en school-days dear
Return, if haply on the idle brain
Remembrance of the pictured map presents
The world's irregular bounds of land and wave!
Nor less beguilement for the lingering hours
Of life at sea, the backward track may yield.
How beautiful the far seen wake appears!
Resplendent as the comet's fiery tail
In Heaven's blue realms! Beneath the proud ship's stern
A thousand mimic whirlpools chafe and boil,
While fitfully up-sent from lucid depths
Thick throngs of silver bubbles sparkle bright,
Like diamonds in the pale beam of the moon.

ON CHILDREN.

Ah! that once more I were a careless child.

Coleridge.

He plays yet like a young prentice the first day, and is not come to his task of melancholy.

Bishop Earle.

Every thing new or young has a charm for human eyes. The rosy light of dawn—the spring of the year—the haunts of our childhood—our earliest companions and our first amusements, are connected with associations infinitely more enchanting than all later scenes and objects. It is partly owing to this law of our nature, that the sight of children thrills and softens the heart in maturer life with such indescribable sensations of sadness and delight. They remind us of our sweetest hours, revive our most hallowed affections, and bring into our eyes those tears of luxurious tenderness that are more precious than springs in a sandy desert. At the pure smile of childhood the baser impulses and more sordid cares of life suddenly betray their genuine aspects of deformity, and vanish from the heart. "A change comes over the spirit of our dreams."

All men of sensibility and imagination, occasionally travel back through the mist of dreams to the scenes of their own happy childhood. The fondly reverted eye is charmed with images of peace and beauty. When contrasted with these delightful retrospections, how dreary and barren seems our onward path! Every step that we take but increases our distance from the regions of enchantment. 'Tis a melancholy journey into unknown lands—an eternal exile from the home of innocence and joy. The atmosphere of existence thickens as we advance, and all things assume a sombre aspect, till at last we reach the dread goal of our

earthly pilgrimage, the Poison Tree of death, and are so weary and wayworn that we even welcome its horrid silence and its hideous shade.

If men may dare to idolize any sublunary thing, it is a sinless and smiling child. "Suffer," says Jesus Christ, "little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, *for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" The author of these beautiful words was an infant himself, and oh, ineffable glory! the pure light that encircled the child, still shone around the man! It is a touching, and I hope not an irreverent reflection, that he whose manhood surpassed all human conceptions—he whom men believe to have been the Deity himself—did not, in his earlier years, exhibit to earthly eyes more innocence and beauty than are easily conceivable in a human child. Could we but preserve our first purity with the progress of our intellectual powers, we should indeed be little lower than the angels. The description of our first parents in Paradise is like a radiant vision, but I cannot help regarding it, beautiful as it is, as in some degree deficient in poetical and human interest, when I remember that they knew not the charms of childhood, but came abruptly, I had almost said unnaturally, into mature existence unaccompanied by those earlier associations which like the shadows in the golden light of evening, grow more and more lovely as our day declines, and reflect their lingering hues upon our latest path. Methinks that even Paradise itself would have looked more divine, had little human cherubim flitted gaily over the green velvet slopes, and passed from flower to flower, their light laughs breaking like celestial music on the air, and their golden locks glittering in the sun.

A lovely woman is an object irresistibly enchanting, and the austerer grace of manhood fills the soul with a proud sense of the majesty of human nature; but there is something far less earthly and more intimately allied to our holiest imaginings in the purity of a child. It satisfies the most delicate fancy and the

severest judgment. Its happy and affectionate feelings are unchecked by one guileful thought, or one cold suspicion. Its little beauteous face betrays each emotion of its heart, and is as transparent as the silvery cloud-veil of a summer sun that shows all the light within. It is as fearless and as innocent in its waking hours as in its quiet slumbers. It loves every one, and smiles on all!

I have sometimes gazed upon a beautiful child with a passion only equalled in intensity by that of youthful love. The heart at such a time is nearly stifled with a mixed emotion of tenderness, admiration and delight. It almost aches with affection. I can fully sympathize in a mother's deep idolatry. I love *all* lovely children; and have often yearned to imprint a thousand passionate kisses upon a stranger's child, though met perhaps but for a moment in theatres or in streets, and passing from me, like a radiant shadow, to be seen no more. The sudden appearance of a child of extraordinary beauty comes upon the spirit like a flash of light, and often breaks up a train of melancholy thoughts, as a sun-burst scatters the mist of morning.

The changing looks and attitudes of children afford a perpetual feast to every eye that has a true perception of grace and beauty. They surpass the sweetest creations of the poet or the painter*. They are prompted by maternal Nature, who keeps an incessant watch over her infant favorites, and directs their minutest movements, and their most evanescent thoughts. Beneath such holy tutorage they can never err. They throw their sleek and pliant limbs into every variety of posture, and still preserve the true line of beauty, as surely as a ball preserves its roundness. They live in an atmosphere of loveliness, and like moving clouds are ever changing their ethereal aspects, and yet always catch the light. Even the moral defects of maturer years are

* Northcote tells us, that when Sir Joshua Reynolds desired to learn what real grace was, he studied it in the natural movements of children.

often beautiful in childhood, and bear a different character. The cunning of the man is innocent archness in the child. Ignorance in the one, is a gross and miserable condition; in the other, it is purity and bliss. The imperfections that are ludicrous or offensive in manhood, in infancy are inexpressibly engaging. The stammering of an adult, or his mistakes in acquiring a new language, are unpleasing to the most friendly ear, and even lower him in some degree in his own estimation. But the first imperfect sounds and broken words of a child, are as sweet as the irregular music of interrupted rivulets. They stir the heart like magic, and impel us as it were, in the sudden wantonness of affection, to shut the little rosy portals of the cherub's soul with a shower of impetuous kisses. The garrulity of age is not like the eager prattling of infancy. The child's artless talk can never weary us. Our ears are as tireless as his tongue.

Timidity in manhood is degrading, but in a little child it is interesting and lovely, whether he flies from the object of alarm like a startled fawn, or nestles closer in his mother's lap. The coquetry of a woman is vanity and deceit, but in a child it is mere playfulness and innocent hilarity. Every thing connected with childhood changes its nature. Words of abuse become words of endearment. *Imp* and *rogue*, when applied to an infant, are soft and fond expressions that fall gracefully from the fairest lips.

The drums and rattles of the child are objects of unalloyed delight, but the playthings of the man are grave and terrible delusions. They goad him with secret thorns that rankle in his heart for ever. Envy, avarice, and ambition, mingle their poison in his sweetest cup. Even his superior knowledge is but a source of evil. It surrounds him with temptations, while it throws a shadow upon all his hopes, and takes off the bloom from life. It is too little for his mind, and too much for his heart.

The child, on the other hand, revels in his happy consciousness of present good, and foresees no future ill. He knows neither

weariness nor discontent. 'Solitude' to him is sometimes 'blithe society,' and in the thickest crowds, he is as free and unconstrained as in his loneliest haunts. His ingenuous heart is never chilled by the glance of a human eye, nor can he fashion his innocent features into a false expression. His own eye is as lucid as the breeze-bared heavens. If he reads no 'sermons in stones,' he sees 'good in every thing.' He has universal faith. He discovers nothing evil, and sees none but friends. He gives up his whole being to gentle affections, and a sense of unequivocal enjoyment. He is not what cold age would make him, "nothing, if not critical." To him the rise of the green curtain at the theatre reveals a real world. He has ever a tear for the distresses of the heroine, and breathes harder as he gazes, with all his soul in his eyes, on the hero's adventurous exploits. The tricks and conundrums of the clown are never flat, or stale, or unprofitable to him, and he fitly testifies to their merit, when holding his lovely head aside (his cheek as round and blooming as a sun-kissed peach,) he claps his little palms together in an ecstacy of admiration, and then turns to the maternal face, as if assured of her hearty sympathy in his delight.

It is a sweet employment to watch the first glimmering of the human mind, and to greet the first signs of joy that give life and animation to the passive beauty of an infant's face, like the earliest streaks of sunshine upon opening flowers. But alas! this pleasure is too often interrupted by the sad reflection, that the bright dawn of existence is succeeded by a comparatively clouded noon, and an almost starless night. Each year of our life is a step lower on the radiant ladder that leads to heaven, and when we at last descend into the horrible vault of death, our best hope is that we may rise again to a state resembling the happy purity of our childhood.

What a holy thing is maternal love! Even its errors reflect honour upon human nature. The mother sees her own offspring

through a sweet and peculiar medium, and traces a thousand charms that are undiscovered by less partial eyes, while she is blind to those defects that are palpable to others. The loved are ever lovely. So beautifully does true affection thus qualify every object to our desires!

There is a divine contagion in all beauteous things. We alternately colour objects with our own fancies and affections, or receive from them a kindred hue.

> "Like the sweet South,
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odour."

This principle pervades all nature, physical and moral. Let those who would trace an expression of serenity and tenderness on a human face, watch a person of sensibility, as he gazes upon a painting by Claude or Raphael. In contemplating a fine picture, we drink in its spirit through our eyes. If a lovely woman would increase her charms, let her gaze long and ardently on all beauteous images. Let her not indulge those passions which deform the features, but cultivate, on the contrary, every soft affection. It will soon become an easy task, for one good feeling suggests and supports another. We insensibly and involuntarily adapt our aspect to our emotions, and long habits of thought and feeling leave a permanent impression on the countenance. Every one believes thus far in physiognomy, and acts more or less decidedly upon his belief. But even the effect upon the features of a transient emotion is truly wonderful. A fierce man often looks beautifully tender and serene when either caressing or caressed, and deceives us like the ocean in a calm, which at times seems "the gentlest of all gentle things."

Who can wonder at the intensity of a mother's love, when even strangers hardened by a struggle with the world are often affected by the engaging ways of children? There is not a more interesting sight in nature than the sudden smile which they sometimes

call up in a countenance rendered habitually grave by the cares of business or ambition. I remember entering a well-known mercantile house in London, just as some unfavorable intelligence had been received. The head of the firm, with his hard but honest features, looked at once stern and anxious. A small hand twitched his coat behind! He turned slowly round, with a sullen and almost a savage brow. His eye fell upon the prettiest little human face that ever gleamed upon the earth. But the child's merry laughter was scarcely more delightful than the bland and beautiful smile that kindled on the merchant's care-worn cheek. His aspect underwent such an instantaneous and entire change, that he looked as if he had changed his nature also. Had a painter stamped his portrait on the canvass at that happy moment, it would have presented an exquisite illustration of amenity and love. Few, however, of his mercantile friends, would have recognized the man of business. He was single and childless; but the fondest parent could not have greeted his own offspring with a sweeter welcome.

I have in some moods preferred the paintings of our own Gainsborough to those of Claude,—and for this single reason, that the former gives a peculiar and more touching interest to his landscapes by the introduction of sweet groups of children. These lovely little figures are moreover so thoroughly English, and have such an out-of-door's air, and seem so much a part of external nature, that an Englishman who is a lover of rural scenery, can hardly fail to be enchanted with the style of his celebrated countryman. His children have not been dandled in courts or drawing-rooms, nor tutored by fiddling and caper-cutting dancing masters. They have a natural grace about them that is always charming to an unsophisticated eye. They spring up into life and beauty like the flowers around them, that are the more lovely the less they are meddled with by an ambitious taste. They are

> The sweetest things that ever grew
> Beside a human door!

When I revisited my dear native country, after an absence of many weary years, and a long dull voyage, my heart was filled with unutterable delight and admiration. The land seemed a perfect paradise. It was in the spring of the year. The blue vault of heaven, over which were scattered a few silver clouds—the clear atmosphere—the balmy vernal breeze—the quiet and picturesque cattle, browsing on luxuriant verdure, or standing knee-deep in a crystal lake—the blue hills sprinkled with snow-white sheep and sometimes partially shadowed by a wandering cloud—the meadows glowing with golden buttercups and bedropped with daisies—the trim hedges of crisp and sparkling holly!—the sound of near but unseen rivulets, and the songs of foliage-hidden birds—the white cottages almost buried amidst trees, like happy human nests—the ivy-covered church, with its old grey spire 'pointing up to heaven,' and its gilded vane gleaming in the light—the sturdy peasants with their instruments of healthy toil—the white-capped matrons bleaching their newly-washed garments in the sun, and throwing them like snow-patches on green slopes or glossy garden shrubs—the sun-browned village girls, resting idly on their round elbows at small open casements, their faces in sweet keeping with the trellised flowers;—all formed a combination of enchantments that would mock the happiest imitative efforts of human art. But though the bare enumeration of the details of this English picture, will perhaps awaken many dear recollections in the reader's mind, I have omitted by far the most interesting feature of the whole scene—*the rosy children loitering about the cottage gates, or tumbling gaily on the warm grass!*

When the cottager of England ventures to link himself for life to the object of his honest affections, and anticipates without dismay, 'the ruddy family around,' he is rebuked by the Political Economists for what they consider his culpable imprudence. These unfeeling calculators seem to forget that a poor man is a human being. They might almost as well expect him to abstain entirely

from the simplest food, (for even that is to him expensive,) as to check all those natural yearnings of the heart which are as necessary to the enjoyment of existence as any purely physical gratification. They forget too, how the thought of his wife and children nerves the labourer's arm, and how when the daily task is over he is soothed and cheered by their evening welcome. His 'home is home, however homely.' If the husband and the father has a heavy task, his reward is great. '*The Cottar's Saturday Night's*' enjoyments are cheaply purchased by a week of labour. Children are not less precious to the English peasant than they were to the Roman matron. They are alike '*the jewels*' of the high-born and the humble.

But even in a political point of view, marriage is commendable, for it puts a man in the way of becoming a quiet, a useful, and an industrious citizen. They who marry, says Bishop Atterbury, give hostages to the public that they will not attempt the ruin of society or disturb its peace. The American Franklin, who can hardly be suspected of a romantic enthusiasm or a want of prudence, expresses his disapproval of the unnatural state of celibacy for life, and maintains that it makes a man of less value than he ought to be. In a moral sense, marriage is especially advantageous. 'Certainly,' says Lord Bacon, 'wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hard-hearted, (good to make severe inquisitors,) because their tenderness is not so often called upon.'

'The best thing I can wish you,' said Sir Walter Scott to Washington Irving, 'is that when you return to your own country you may get married, and have a family of young bairns about you. If you are happy, there they are to share your happiness; and if you are otherwise—there they are to comfort you.'

No parent can be wholly wretched, let his fate be what it may,

if his children are about him, with their cheeks tinged with health. It is sweet to be surrounded by those whom we dearly love, and who love us in return beyond all the world. There is no music so delightful as the sound of a child's affectionate voice—and no sight so cheering as its little happy face. But alas! in this comfortless and uncongenial clime*, the forlorn English exile must too generally forego these domestic pleasures. It is indeed a terrible deprivation. This is the unkindest cut of all. It is the stroke that goes most directly to the heart.

It is not the mere absence alone that constitutes the bitter trial, but a consciousness of the vast intervening distance. The parent and the child are divided from each other by a world of waters. They live in different spheres. The death of a child would scarcely seem a heavier doom than such a separation. In the one case there is an end of all doubt, suspense and fear; but in the other there are feverish hopes, and hideous apprehensions. The mother dreams incessantly of her distant child, for whom she anticipates every ill that flesh is heir to. If sometimes in a happier moment she soothes her soul with brighter fancies, and sees her dear offspring wandering in careless happiness about the same green spots that are hallowed by her own earliest associations, the delight is neither lasting nor unalloyed.

"Oh! there is e'en a happiness that makes the heart afraid."

This sweet picture of the imagination is soon contrasted with the drear reality of her own position, and the possible difference of her child's actual fate, from that presented by her flattering dreams. The re-action of the mind is fearful. 'That way madness lies.' A state of exile is every way unnatural, and breaks humanity's divinest links. The spirit of domestic happiness rarely wanders far from her native hearth.

* India.

The generous and chivalric protection which men bestow upon the feebler but fairer sex, is allied in some degree to the feeling which we cherish towards a child. The graceful and trusting helplessness of both is flattering to our pride, and is an appeal to our love that is utterly irresistible. He who has a large family of children, is necessarily conscious of an agreeable self-importance. If he has the means of supporting them, they cannot be too numerous. His children are so many re-creations of himself. They are ties that must bind his affections to the world, and yet solace him in his latest hour, for a man cannot wholly die while his children live. He has spread out his existence into different channels. When he looks upon his little divided lives, he feels not the effect of age so palpably as he who is solitary and childless. He beholds in them the 'lovely April of his prime.'

'This is to be new made when he is old,
And see his blood warm when he feels it cold.'

When the wedded lose a partner, the dead parent is still present in the child. It is a living miniature of the departed. It is pleasant, when we become conscious of the defiling influence of the world, and feel the cold blasts of care, to see ourselves reflected in a fairer form in the bright faces of our children. They suggest the purest and sweetest thoughts. They are beautiful in themselves, and like the fresh buds of spring are full of precious promise of blossoms and of shelter. He whose evening of life is cherished and adorned by a lovely cluster of kindred faces, may well exult in his latter state, whatever may have been the trials and deprivations of his earlier hours.

WOMAN.

The day-god sitting on his western throne
With all his 'gorgeous company of clouds'—
The gentle moon that meekly disenshrouds
Her beauty when the solar glare is gone—
The myriad eyes of night—the pleasant tone
Of truant rills when o'er the pebbled ground
Their silver voices tremble—the calm sound
Of rustling leaves in noon-tide forests lone—
The cheerful song of birds—the hum of bees—
The zephyrs' dance that like the footing fine
Of moonlight fays scarce prints the glassy seas,—
Are *all* enchantments! But Oh, what are these
When music, poetry, and love combine
In WOMAN's voice and lineaments divine!

SONNET.

ON HEARING CAPTAIN JAMES GLENCAIRN BURNS SING (IN INDIA) HIS FATHER'S SONGS.

How dream-like is the sound of native song
Heard on a foreign shore! The wanderer's ear
Drinks wild enchantment,—swiftly fade the drear
And cold realities that round him throng,
While in the sweet delirium, deep and strong,
The past is present and the distant near!
Such sound is sacred ever,—doubly dear
When heard by patriot exiles parted long
From all that love hath hallowed. But a spell
Ev'n yet more holy breathes in every note
Now trembling on my heart. *A proud Son sings*
The lay of BURNS! Oh! what imaginings
Awake, as o'er a foreign region float
These filial echoes of the father's shell!

Calcutta, August 7, 1833.

CONSOLATIONS OF EXILE.

[OR AN EXILE'S ADDRESS TO HIS DISTANT CHILDREN.]

I.

O'ER the vast realm of tempest-troubled Ocean—
O'er the parched lands that vainly thirst for showers—
Through the long night—or when nor sound nor motion
Stirs in the noon of day the sultry bowers—
Not all un'companied by pleasant dreams
My weary spirit panteth on the way;
Still on mine inward sight the subtle gleams
That mock the fleshly vision brightly play.
Oh! the heart's links nor time nor change may sever,
Nor Fate's destructive hand, if life remain;
O'er hill, and vale, and plain, and sea, and river,
The wanderer draws the inseparable chain!

Fair children! still, like phantoms of delight,
Ye haunt my soul on this strange distant shore,
As the same stars shine through the tropic night
That charmed me at my own sweet cottage door.
Though I have left ye long, I love not less;
Though ye are far away, I watch ye still;
Though I can ne'er embrace ye, I may bless,
And e'en though absent, guard ye from each ill!
Still the full interchange of soul is ours,
A silent converse o'er the waters wide,
And Fancy's spell can speed the lingering hours,
And fill the space that yearning hearts divide.

III.

And not alone the written symbols show
Your spirits' sacred stores of love and truth,
Art's glorious magic bids the canvass glow
With all your grace and loveliness and youth;
The fairy forms that in my native land
Oft filled my fond heart with a parent's pride,
Are gathered near me on this foreign strand,
And smilingly, in these strange halls, reside;
And almost I forget an exile's doom,
For while your filial eyes around me gleam,
Each scene and object breathes an air of home,
And time and distance vanish like a dream!

IV.

Oh! when sweet Memory's radiant calm comes o'er
The weary soul, as moonlight glimmerings fall
O'er the hushed ocean, forms beloved of yore
And joys long fled, her whispers soft recall;
At such an hour I live and smile again,
As light of heart as in that golden time
When, as a child, I trod the vernal plain,
Nor knew the shadow of a care or crime.
Nor dream of death, nor weariness of life,
Nor freezing apathy, nor fierce desire,
Then chilled a thought with unborn rapture rife,
Or seared my breast with wild ambition's fire.

V.

From many a fruit and flower the hand of Time
Hath brushed the bloom and beauty; yet mine eye,
Though Life's sweet summer waneth, and my prime
Of health and hope is past, can oft espy
Amid the fading wilderness around
Such lingering hues as Eden's holy bowers

In earth's first radiance wore, and only found
Where not a cloud of sullen sadness lours.
Oh! how the pride and glory of this world
May pass unmirrored o'er the darkened mind,
Like gilded banners o'er the grave unfurled,
Or Beauty's witcheries flashed upon the blind.

VI.

Though this frail form hath felt the shafts of pain,
Though my soul sickens for her native sky,
In visionary hours my thoughts regain
Their early freshness, and soon check the sigh
That sometimes from mine inmost heart would swell
And mar a happier mood. Oh! then how sweet,
Dear Boys! upon remembered bliss to dwell,
And here your pictured lineaments to greet!
'Till Fancy, bright Enchantress, shifts the scene
To British ground, and musical as rills,
Ye laugh and loiter in the meadows green,
Or climb with joyous shouts the sunny hills!

Calcutta, September 4, 1834.

LINES

WRITTEN ON THE RUINS OF RAJHMAHAL.

Hail, stranger, hail! whose eye shall here survey
The path of Time, where ruin marks his way,
When wildly moans the solemn midnight bird,
And the gaunt jackal's piercing cry is heard;
If thine the soul with sacred ardour fraught,
Rapt in the poet's dream, or sage's thought,
To thee, these mouldering walls a voice shall raise,
And sadly tell how earthly pride decays;
How human hopes, like human works, depart,
And leave behind the ruins of the heart!

SONNET.

EVENING, ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES.

I WANDERED thoughtfully by Gunga's shore,
While the broad sun upon the slumbering wave
Its last faint flush of golden radiance gave,
And tinged with tenderest hues some ruins hoar.
Methinks this earth had never known before
A calm so deep—'twas silent as the grave.
The smallest bird its light wing could not lave
In the smooth flood, nor from the green-wood soar,
If but the tiniest branch its pinions stirred
Or shook the dew-drops from the leaves, unheard.
Like pictured shadows 'gainst the western beam
The dark boats slept, while each lone helmsman stood
Still as a statue!—the strange quietude
Enthralled my soul like some mysterious dream!

SONNET—GRIEF.

IMPASSIONED grief is dumb—no sign or sound
Can form its faithful language. Sorrow's dart
In fevered breasts awakes an inward smart
That friendship may not share. Oh! curse profound,
To bear each maddening passion darkly bound
Within that fearful cell, the shrouded heart!
The quivering lip, the quick convulsive start,
But feebly tell the strife. The crowd around
When sinks the strong man 'neath the sullen stream
Thus see but bubbles rise,—these ill reveal
The struggler's pangs! When mourners pant and teem
With secret thought, and voiceless anguish feel,
The world's calm brow—the charms of nature seem
To mock the smothered soul's unheard appeal!

ON CARE AND CONDENSATION IN WRITING.

When Apelles was reproached with the paucity of his productions, and the incessant attention with which he re-touched his pieces, he condescended to make no other answer than that he painted for perpetuity.

The Rambler.

Alcestides objecting that Euripides had only in three days composed three verses, whereas himself had written three hundred · Thou tell'st truth (quoth he); but here is the difference; thine shall only be read for three days, whereas mine shall continue three ages.

Webster's Dedication to the Reader of the 'White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona.'

THERE are some writers who seem to regard mere quickness and facility of production as of more importance than the quality of the thing produced. They insult the public with a flippant boast of the little time which they have thought it necessary to bestow upon a work intended for its acceptance, and make that a subject of triumph which calls for an apology. If the public were in a state of intellectual deprivation, and were too voracious to be nice, these rapid writers might be looked upon as benefactors:—but the case is precisely the reverse; the world abounds in books, both good and bad. There is at all events no demand for a greater number of the latter kind. We can afford to wait for the result of an author's best exertions, and are not obliged to accept with gratitude the first crude and hurried productions that he is disposed to offer*. It is not the task of a day for a man to enter into competition with such writers as Shakespeare and Milton, or Byron and Wordsworth, or to produce a work of whatever kind, which the world would not willingly let die. A reader is as little curious about the number of hours which

* I hate all those nonsensical stories about Lope de Vega and his writing a play in a morning before breakfast. He had time enough to do it after.—*Hazlitt.*

a poet may have taken to write his verses, as about the number of arms or legs of his study chair. The question is, whether the verses are good or bad, and not how, when, or where, they were composed. Even the age of a writer is a consideration of very slight importance. His years have no inseparable connection with his works. The latter stand alone in the world's eye, and are judged of by their intrinsic merit, and by this alone must they live or die. There are no works in the language that have been long popular merely on account of the precocity of the author. The peculiar character and condition of a young poet may excite for a while the generous sympathy of the public mind, and direct a friendly attention to his productions, as in the case of Kirke White and Chatterton; but this adventitious popularity can never last. These two unhappy youths have already lost their first bloom of reputation, and we begin to value their productions according to their intrinsic worth alone, which, though far from being inconsiderable, has been greatly overrated. If their writings had been entirely destitute of genuine merit, the circumstances with which they were connected would not have saved them from an almost instantaneous oblivion. Who now reads Dermody* or Blackett? Southey's friend Jones, the butler,

* When only ten years of age, Dermody was accustomed to translate a short poem from the Greek or Latin, with the same ease and rapidity, with which a maturer genius would write a familiar private letter. Some of these translations are preserved in the account of his life, but they form no portion of the permanent literature of his country. The effusions of facility and precocity may be nine days' wonder, but no more. Dermody was like Master Betty, the actor, who was only a surprising boy, and who became but an ordinary man. Untimely fruits rarely ripen. Dermody was the son of a respectable schoolmaster, and in his ninth year, was actually in the situation of a teacher of Greek and Latin in his father's establishment. Yet he lived to the age of twenty-seven, and though a prolific writer, left nothing behind him that the world will care to preserve. His earliest productions were his best, but even these have very little intrinsic merit. Men of true genius have been seldom remarkable in their childhood for any manifest superiority of talent. Great intellectual power is usually tardy in its development. There is often a seeming sluggishness or obtuseness in the early years of those gifted persons who subsequently tower above their

was forgotten in a few months, though his verses were edited by the Laureate, and praised in the *Quarterly Review*. A certain literary Cardinal used to boast, that he had written all his works with the same pen. If he had been unable to procure another, the world might have commended his careful preservation of this single instrument of author-craft, and have pitied the unhappy printers who had to compose from an unintelligible manuscript; but as this mechanical difficulty was of his own choosing, we only smile at such an indication of littleness and obliquity of mind. His ingenious saving of quills conferred no interest on his works. He, however, who voluntarily writes against time, and fancies that there is a prodigious merit in declining to avail himself of a few additional hours for consideration and correction, is not a whit less absurd and puerile than was the writer who thus voluntarily confined himself for years to the use of a single quill. Such an uncalled-for economy of pens and time is neither useful nor commendable, but shows "a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it."

Anna Seward had the impudence to talk of translating an Ode of Horace while dressing her hair. If her translations had been worth a straw, we should have been surprised at her facility; but their real value would have received no additional charm from the mode in which they were produced. On the contrary, we should have had reason to be dissatisfied with them, however good, when we came to consider how much better they might have been made, if the author had been less presumptuous and more careful. Her affectation of facility was disrespectful both to

fellow men, that deceives or puzzles the judgment of their associates. Rousseau, in his *Emilius*, observes that nothing is more difficult than to distinguish real dulness in children, from that apparent and fallacious stupidity, the forerunner of great abilities. He reminds us that the younger Cato in his infancy, passed for an idiot. He speaks also of a profound reasoner of his own acquaintance, who at a pretty advanced age appeared to his family and friends to possess a very ordinary capacity. Sheridan, Walter Scott, Byron, and many other men of equal eminence, were by no means brilliant in the school-room.

Horace and to the public, and her indecent haste or negligence was in direct defiance of the advice of Horace himself. The author of an impromptu may boast with some reason of his quickness, but other writers are not timed like race horses. If these vain and careless authors wrote with greater elegance and effect than modest and careful ones, we might restrain our indignation at their fopperies; but it is almost idle to observe that true genius is very rarely the accompaniment of self-conceit, and that in all human arts the attainment of excellence is the result of a happy combination of skill and labour. Extreme facility is, generally speaking, an unfavorable indication of the character of an author's mind. Rapid writers, like rapid talkers, are far more frequently shallow than profound. The tongue, says Butler, is like a racehorse, which runs the faster the lesser weight it carries. It is the same with the pen. The veins of golden thought do not lie upon the surface of the mind. The wealthiest men may want ready cash. Some people fall into the egregious mistake of supposing that easy writing must be easy reading. It is quite the contrary. As Pope says,

> " True ease in writing comes from art, not chance;
> As those move easiest who have learned to dance*."

" The best performances," says Melmoth, " have generally cost the most labour; and that ease which is essential to fine writing, has seldom been attained without repeated and severe corrections. With as much facility as the numbers of Prior seem

* " When I was looking on Pope's foul copy of the Iliad, and observing how very much it was corrected and interlined, he said, 'I believe you would find, upon examination, that those parts which have been the most corrected read the easiest.' "—*Spence's Anecdotes*.

A Mr. Tupper has published a Continuation of Christabel, and has told his readers that it was "*the pleasant labour of but a very few days.*" Coleridge wrote the first part in 1797, and the second in 1800, and did not publish them till 1816. See a review of this Continuation in Blackwood's Magazine for Dec. 1838.

to have flowed from him, they were the result of much application. A friend of mine, who undertook to transcribe one of the noblest performances of the finest genius that this, or perhaps any age can boast, has often assured me that there is not a single line, as it is published, which stands in conformity with the original manuscript."*

Rousseau has remarked, that with whatever faculties a man may be born, the art of writing is of difficult acquisition. Hazlitt was so many years before he could give expression to his thoughts, that he almost despaired of ever succeeding as an author. It is true that he attained great facility before he died. It is thus also with the painter. The quick master-touch is only to be acquired at the expense of long toil and study. A manual dexterity, however, is almost sure to be attained at last, after a certain degree of practice; but a corresponding ease and celerity of execution is not always to be acquired by an author, even in a long life of literary labour. Some of the most eloquent writers that ever lived, have produced their earliest and latest works with the same difficulty and toil.

> "For e'en by genius excellence is bought
> With length of labour, and a life of thought."

It has been very justly observed, that nothing is such an obstacle to the production of excellence as the power of producing what is *pretty good* with ease and rapidity.

Rousseau has described "the ceaseless inquietude," with which he attained the magic and beauty of his style. "His existing manuscripts," says D'Israeli, "display more erasures than Pope's, and show his eagerness to set down his first thoughts, and his art to raise them to the impassioned style of his imagination*." Dr. Johnson has told us of the "blotted

* My manuscripts blotted, scratched, interlined, and scarcely legible, attest the trouble they cost me; nor is there one of them but I have been obliged to transcribe four or five times, before it went to press.—*Rousseau's Confessions.*

manuscripts of Milton," and has shown the painful care and fastidiousness of Pope (to which D'Israeli alludes) by the publication of some of the corrected proofs of the translation of Homer. Swift highly appreciated Pope's art of condensation.

"In Pope I cannot read a line
But, with a sigh, I wish it mine;
When he can in one couplet fix
More sense than I could do in six."

Ugo Foscolo, in his elegant Essay on Petrarch, informs us, that if the "manuscripts did not still exist, it would be impossible to imagine or believe the unwearied pains this poet has bestowed on the correction of his verses." "They are curious monuments," he adds, "although they afford little aid in exploring by what secret workings the long and laborious meditation of Petrarch has spread over his poetry all the natural charms of sudden and irresistible inspiration." It is said of the celebrated Bembo, that he had a desk with forty divisions, through which each of his sonnets was passed in due succession, at fixed intervals of time, and that at every change of place it received a fresh revisal*. Joseph Warton, in his Essay on Pope, quotes the assertion of Fenton, that Waller passed the greatest part of a summer in composing a poem of ten stanzas. "So that," adds Fenton, "however he is generally reputed the parent of those *swarms of insect wits, who affect to be thought easy writers*, it is evident that he bestowed much time and care on his poems before he ventured them out of his hands." Warton also mentions, in further illustration of his subject, that it is well known that the writings of Voiture, of Sarassin, and La Fontaine, cost them much pains,

* Voltaire, in his *Temple of Taste*, represents that in the innermost part of the sanctuary he saw a small number of truly great men employed in correcting those faulty passages of their works, which would have passed for beauties in the productions of writers of inferior genius.

and were laboured into that facility for which they are so famous, with repeated alterations and many erasures. Moliere, is reported to have passed whole days in fixing upon a proper epithet or rhyme, although his verses have the flow and freedom of conversation. Some of Rochefoucault's maxims received twenty or thirty revisions, and the author eagerly sought the advice of his friends. Buffon called genius *patience.*

It is said that Shakespeare *never blotted a line.* To this we may reply with Ben Jonson, *would that he had blotted a thousand!** The errors and imperfections that are discoverable even in *his* wondrous pages, are spots on the sun that we often have occasion to wish away. Foreigners constantly throw these defects in the teeth of his national admirers. But Pope, in his Preface to Shakespeare, has shown that the great bard did not always disdain the task of correction, though he sometimes neglected it. The *Merry Wives of Windsor* and the tragedy of *Hamlet* were almost entirely re-written.

"E'en copious Dryden wanted, or forgot,
The last and greatest art—the art to blot."

Dryden sometimes, however, corrected his pieces very carefully, when he was not writing hurriedly for bread. He spent a fortnight in composing and correcting the Ode on St. Cecilia's Day. But what is this, exclaims Dr. Johnson, to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whose *Equivoque,* a poem of only three hun-

* A portion of the passage in which these expressions occur, may be pertinently repeated in this place.—"I remember," says Ben Jonson, "the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakspeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, "Would that he had blotted a thousand," which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who *chose that circumstance to commend their friend, wherein he most faulted* ; and to justify mine own candour; for I loved the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any."

dred and forty-six lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and *three years to revise it?* Ten years elapsed between the first brief sketch of Goldsmith's Traveller and its publication, during which it was nearly re-written two or three times. In his first copy of *The Deserted Village* the lines were written very wide apart to give room for alterations, and we are told by Bishop Percy that scarcely a single line in any of Goldsmith's poetical works remained as it was originally written.

The Memoir of Gibbon was composed nine times, and some of Pascal's works were corrected and re-written just as frequently. Addison would stop the press when almost a whole impression of the *Spectator* was worked off, to insert a new preposition or conjunction. Dr. Johnson is said to have corrected and improved every new edition of his *Rambler*. I have read somewhere of a poet, who literally died of vexation, in consequence of discovering an error in one of his verses, just as he was about to present them to his patron. Hazlitt says in his *Plain Speaker*, that he was assured by a person who had the best means of knowing, that the proof of Burke's *Letter to a noble Lord* ("the most rapid, impetuous, glancing and sportive of all his works") was returned to the printing office so completely blotted over with alterations, that the compositors refused to correct it as it was, took the whole matter to pieces, and re-set the copy. Ariosto is said to have made many and great alterations in his immortal poem. Akenside so altered and corrected the "Pleasures of Imagination," and yet so little satisfied his own judgment, that after it had passed through several editions he found it better to re-write it altogether. He did not live to finish the new version, but two or three books or sections of it are now usually included in his works. It is curious to observe his fastidious alterations. His spirited *Epistle to Curio* was first published in heroic couplets, and afterwards turned into an ode in ten-line stanzas. It is true that these two great changes were by no means improvements, but they prove that Akenside

was not one of those who think labour needless in a man of genius. He urged this principle, however, too far. He delayed the correction of the warm effusions of his youth until old age had chilled his imagination. This was a sad mistake. But whatever may be the disadvantages of over-labour and too great fastidiousness, they are far less dangerous than errors of an opposite character. I believe no one has seriously recommended haste and negligence of composition. The best critics, on the contrary, have urged the necessity of assiduous care. It is remarkable that some of our most voluminous writers have confessed the great toil and attention which they bestowed upon their works. Cowper, a vigorous, and by some thought a careless poet, in one of his delightful letters, observes, that "*to touch and retouch* is, though some writers boast of negligence, and others would be ashamed to show their foul copies, the secret of almost all good writing, especially in verse." He adds, "I am never weary of it myself." Pope, in the first draught of his preface to his poems, had made a similar acknowledgment. "The sense of my faults," said he, "first made me correct; besides that it was as pleasant to me to correct as to write" Moore, whose own poetry, glowing as it is, bears internal evidence of great care, assures us in his Life of Byron, that his Lordship was no exception to the general law of nature, that imposes labour as the price of perfection. He gives several curious specimens of the noble poet's fastidious changes of phrase, and his laborious correction of defects. Medwin, in his Life of Shelley, published in the *Athenæum*, tells us that that poet exercised the severest self-criticism on every thing he wrote, and that his manuscripts, like those of Tasso at Ferrara, were scarcely decypherable. His care, however, I should think, was bestowed more on the choice of striking and gorgeous expressions than on that finish and condensation of style which is now so much neglected. He is too exuberant. Drummond of Hawthornden beautifully and truly says,

I know that all the Muse's heavenly lays
With *toil of spirit* are so dearly bought.

In a free translation of Boileau's *Art of Poetry*, partly by Sir Wm. Soame, but chiefly by Dryden, authors are strongly cautioned against too much haste:

Take time for thinking; never work in haste;
And value not yourself for writing fast.
————Of labour not afraid:
A hundred times consider what you've said;
Polish, repolish, every colour lay,
And sometimes add, but oftener take away.

Horace, who is thought a good authority in such matters, not only advises a poet to keep his work by him for nine years, but particularly insists on the absolute necessity of frequent correction. Beattie confesses in a letter to Sir William Forbes that he thinks it right to let his pieces lie by him for some time, because he was a much more impartial judge of such of his works as he had almost forgotten, than of such as were fresh in his memory. Pope is reported by Richardson, the painter, to have remarked that in Garth's *Dispensary* "there was scarcely one of the alterations, innumerable as they were, in every new edition, that was not for the better." By Thomson's successive corrections in the *Seasons*, Johnson seems to think they lost something of their *raciness;* but Mitford, in his elegant edition of Gray, informs us that he possesses an interlined copy that belonged to Thomson, and which contained corrections in the author's own handwriting, that were very decided improvements. Pope is said to have suggested some of Thomson's alterations. The epithets in the first edition of the *Seasons* were, it is said, too numerous and often merely expletive.

"Our own times," says Moore, "have witnessed more than one extraordinary intellect, whose depth has not prevented their treasures from lying ever ready within reach. But the records of

Immortality furnish few such instances; and all we know of the works that she has hitherto marked with her seal, sufficiently authorize the position,—that nothing great and durable has ever been produced with ease, and that labour is the parent of all the lasting wonders of this world, whether in verse or stone, whether poetry or pyramids." Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, tells us that even the fluent Scott used often to correct very carefully. The Shepherd had seen several of the poet's manuscripts that had numerous corrections and additions on the alternate white page.

When a man feels that he is writing for posterity, and that the propriety of almost every separate thought and expression will be canvassed and criticised throughout succeeding ages, it is no wonder that he should be scrupulous and careful. Those who merely write on some subject of the day, or for newspapers and other ephemeral publications, have neither time nor occasion for such severity of toil; their articles are usually read as hurriedly and as carelessly as they are written.

This is the golden age of periodicals, and though I should be the last to dispute the numerous and great advantages of this species of publication, I confess that I think it has an injurious effect on some of the higher branches of our literature. The genius that should be devoted to works of permanent importance is now often frittered away in divided and hasty contributions to miscellanies of temporary interest. As rapidity and punctuality are great recommendations in a contributor,—as the scale of remuneration is regulated more by the quantity than the quality of their articles,—and as they are generally published without a genuine signature, and therefore do not involve the reputation of the writer, it is not surprising that terseness, or polish, or condensation of style is never looked for, and rarely met with, in the pages of even the most respectable of our literary periodicals. They exhibit, on the contrary, a vicious redundance of phraseology, and a reckless disdain of all those gentler or severer

charms which have cast such an air of immortality about our best English Classics.

The great majority of our prose fictions are so melodramatic and over-wrought, that they have few attractions for a reader of true taste. They indicate, however, the lethargic and unhealthy condition of the public mind, which requires such coarse and strong excitement that the productions which enchanted it half a century ago are now regarded as tame and spiritless. If such a sweet little cabinet picture as the Vicar of Wakefield (so exquisitely finished—so full of character—so thoroughly *English*) were now published, for the first time, it would probably meet with the most contemptuous neglect. Its size alone would be a bar to its popularity. Literature has become a matter of measurement. Every prose fiction is expected to be a work in three volumes, post octavo. The publisher gives an order to one of his literary tradesmen to send him by a given time a novel of the fashionable size. He knows that if it exceeded or fell short of the prescribed dimensions, the effect would be quite as fatal to its success as any failure connected with its claims as a literary composition. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, in the first place, that the externals or corporeal part of a novel should be of a particular size and character, and in the next, that its spirit and diction should be wild, startling, and inflated. The public have now so accustomed themselves to a kind of morbid excitement in literature, that they have lost all relish for the quiet simplicity of truth and nature. However, it is quite impossible that this should last much longer. All artificial stimulants are succeeded by a strong re-action, and an indulgence in a taste for the intoxicating ingredients of our present literature, is as bad as a habit of opium-eating. The public will soon become sick of fierce and gloomy Byronisms, and discover that they are but ill adapted to improve the taste and judgment. They must ultimately return to simpler and nobler models. It will then be acknowledg-

ed as an undeniable truth, that contortions and convulsions are not always indications of spirit and power, and that force and profundity of mind are quite consistent with a chaste propriety of style.

When we revert to the dignity of Milton, and the grace and amenity of Goldsmith, the manly vigour of Dryden, and the point and elegance of Pope, the weighty sententiousness of Johnson, and the purity, the refinement and the quiet humour of Addison, we feel how much English literature has suffered by the present popular demand for a species of poetry at once metaphysical and melodramatic, and for crude, flippant and shallow criticisms, and flashy and turgid essays. I do not entirely coincide with Lord Byron in his estimate of the poetical character of Pope. When he places him by implication above Shakspeare and Milton, he is guilty of an extravagance that makes us question his sincerity. But the "little Nightingale" of Twickenham has certainly been as much underrated by others as he has been overrated by Lord Byron. Pope is not in the first rank of English poets, which includes the four great names of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare and Milton; but he and Dryden (for it is difficult to settle their rival claims) are indisputably at the head of the second.

The peculiarities of one class of literature have almost always a direct or indirect effect upon all others of the same period. The rapid, inflated and redundant prose of the present age, corresponds with the similar characteristics of its poetry. It is true that Wordsworth and Coleridge may seem in some respects exceptions, and they have been censured for very opposite faults. But extremes meet. The style of both of these poets is occasionally as diffuse, tumid and gorgeous, as at other times it is simple and bare. No one can be insensible to the real greatness of these writers, (the former unquestionably the first poet of his time,) but they do not so dazzle us with excess of light as to blind us to their defects. They have neglected to concentrate their powers, and have scorned to subject themselves to that severe

self-discipline which is so necessary to success in the noble struggle for immortality. Even Campbell and Rogers, though in their earlier works they showed a due respect to the public, and an anxious and judicious regard to their own fame, have lately deserted their classical models, and have fallen into the vices of the new school. The "*Theodric*" of the one, and the "*Italy*" of the other, are equally unworthy of the authors, and are so different from the style of their better days, that had these works been published anonymously, Campbell and Rogers are the two last names with which the public would have connected them. They are verbose and feeble.

Mere rapidity and voluminousness are now commonly mistaken for proofs of the power and fruitfulness of genius. The Dutchman, who considered his brother a great poet because he had written a book as big as a cheese, was not more ludicrously opposed to the true principles of criticism, than are many of our periodical reviewers*. They pronounce him only a great poet who has produced a bulky volume, and reverse the old saying that a great book is a great evil. It is the small volume of modest and unpresuming appearance that is most offensive. When Gray first published his poems, they were so brief, and so few in number, that to give his work the appearance of a volume he was obliged to swell it out by printing on one side only of the pages. If it had been brought into juxta-position with the gigantic and bloated quartos of these times, it would have looked more like the ghost of a book than a genuine volume. Were a work of such Lilliputian exterior now

* This Dutchman, then, a man of taste,
Holding a cheese that weighed a hundred pound,
Thus like a burgomaster, spoke with judgment vast—
'No poet like my broder step de ground:
He be de bestest poet, look!
Dat all de world must please;
For he heb vrite von book,
So *big* as all dis *cheese!*'

Peter Pindar.

published, the author would be laughed at for supposing that it could attract the slightest attention.

As 'tis a greater mystery in the art
Of painting to foreshorten any part
Than draw it out, so 'tis in books the chief
Of all perfections to be plain and brief.

Butler.

In literature, as in every thing else, quality and not quantity is the true test of excellence; and though the remark is a mere truism, it is not the less called for. There may be more wealth in a lady's jewel-box than in a merchant's ware-house, and there is more poetry and thought in five couplets of Pope than in ten cantos of Sir Richard Blackmore. Voluminous and diffuse writers are rarely the favorites of fame. The greater number of those who flourished in former times are now utterly forgotten. Posterity examines unwieldy luggage with a severe and jealous eye, and seems glad of an excuse to toss it into the waves of Lethe. The few voluminous writers whose works still exist, would have been forgotten also, had they not been as careful as they were copious. What a vast crowd of prolific scribblers have these great and happy men survived! How many thousands have been buried under the weight of their own lumber!

So far from mere voluminousness being the effect of superior power, it is an undoubted truth that every writer of a condensed style could be as diffuse as he pleases, if he were not anxious about the quality of his materials. The converse of this will not hold. Blackmore could not have compressed his thoughts like Pope, but Pope, had he been willing to degrade and sacrifice his genius, might have been quite as diffuse as Blackmore.

Against much that has been already said, it may perhaps be urged that a rich soil is characterized by a speedy and abundant vegetation. I admit it; but this soil must be cultivated with incessant care, or it will soon be covered with a rank luxuriance

of weeds and foliage. I do not maintain that quick conceptions are not a sign of genius, but that to connect glorious thoughts with words fit to enshrine and represent them, is a difficulty only to be overcome by assiduous toil and study. It is justly remarked by Shenstone, that fine writing is the result of spontaneous thoughts and laboured composition. Burns has acknowledged, that though his ideas were easy and rapid, the necessary correction of his verses was a heavy task. The great Milton well knew the advantage of condensation, and after dictating about forty lines would reduce them to half that number. It was the custom of Virgil "to pour out his verses in the morning, and pass the day *in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies.*" A French author happily illustrated the comparative facility of a diffuse style, when he apologized for the length of a letter by stating that he had not time to write a shorter one.

The writers of the present day, both in prose and verse, possess perhaps, taken as a body, more energy of thought and passion, and more of the genuine spirit of inspiration than their predecessors in the time of Queen Anne; and if they were only half as careful and condensed, their great superiority would be evident. But too many of them are prodigal of their intellectual wealth, and waste their powers.

EVENING SOUNDS.

Now slowly sails the gray mist o'er the plain;
  The busy 'hum of men' is heard afar,
Blent with the murmurs of the restless main
  Whose tremulous bosom glimmers with the star
Meek Evening wears beneath her dusky veil.
  And hark! the nightingale's melodious lay!
Borne on the wandering wind o'er hill and dale,
  The soft notes rise, and fall, and melt away!

LOVE-STANZAS.

I.

They tell me health's transparent flower glows freshly on thy cheek,
They say that in the festal hall thy looks of rapture speak;
They know that boundless love is mine, but do not read my heart,
And little dream their friendly words awake an inward smart.

II.

I well might weep to learn that care had blanched thy lovely brow,
And yet thine happier fate calls forth no grateful gladness now;
I judge from this sad jealous breast, and deem if thou wert true,
Thou could'st not feel a moment's mirth, nor wear that rosy hue.

III.

I should not thus forget, dear girl, that early years are bright,
That hearts so young and pure as thine, are touched with holy light,
And like the fountain's crystal streams, that through spring meadows run,
Reflect alone the fairest things that kindle in the sun.

IV.

They tell me too, that 'mid the crowd thou hast a smile for all,
That oft upon the lowliest ear thy kindest accents fall:
And oh! I doubly mourn my fate, and breathe an envious sigh,
To think the stranger hears that voice, and meets that radiant eye!

And yet 'tis selfish thus to grieve—'tis base to doubt thy truth,
Those looks and tones of tenderness beseem thy gentle youth,
And if thy soul of virtue's charms displays a bounteous store,
Thou need'st not, sweet one, love the less, though *I* must love the more!

VI.

In fancy's trance I kiss thy brow, and clasp thee to my breast,—
But ah! how soon that dream departs, like sun-light in the west!
And then my path is dark as their's who wander through the night
When suddenly the fitful winds have quenched a cheering light.

VII.

And yet not wholly comfortless is home's deserted cell,
For there thy written words remain of faithful love to tell;
And these are symbols of the soul that life's fond records save,
E'en when the hand that traced the lines is mouldering in the grave!

VIII.

And still around my neck is hung, that last dear gift of thine,
So like a fairy talisman—a spell almost divine!
I hold it in my trembling hand—I touch thy braided hair—
I do but press the secret spring—and see thy features fair!

SONNET—TO MY TWIN BOYS.

Ye seem not, sweet ones, formed for human care—
Your dreams are tinged by heaven ;—your glad eyes meet
A charm in every scene ; for all things greet
The dawn of life with hues divinely fair !
How brightly yet your laughing features wear
The bloom of early joy ! Your bosoms beat
With no bewildering fears,—your cup is sweet—
The manna of delight is melting there !
Twin buds of life and love !—my hope and pride !
Fair priceless jewels of a father's heart !
Stars of my home ! No saddening shadows hide
Your beauty now. Your stainless years depart
Like glittering streams that softly murmur by,
Or white-winged birds that pierce the sunny sky !

SONNET.

Oh ! now glad Nature bursts upon mine eye !
The night of care is o'er. Deep rapture thrills
My waking heart ; for Life's deforming ills,
That come like shadows when the storm is nigh,
Foreboding strife, at length have floated by
And left my spirit free !—The skylark trills
His matin song ; the cloud-resembling hills
In dim cerulean beauty slumbering lie,
And form the throne of Peace ; the silver stream
Is sparkling in the sun—its bright waves seem
Instinct with joy ; the verdant breast of earth
Teems with delight.—The *past* is like a dream,
A dull trance broken by the voice of mirth,
Or grey mist scatteerd by the morning beam !

HOME-VISIONS.

[WRITTEN IN INDIA.]

I.

The skies are blue as summer seas—the plains are green and bright—
The groves are fair as Eden's bowers—the streams are liquid light—
The sun-rise bursts upon the scene, like glory on the soul,
And richly round the couch of Day the twilight curtains roll.

II.

But oh! though beautiful it be, I yearn to leave the land,—
It glows not with the holier hues that tinge my native strand,
Where shadows of departed dreams still float o'er hill and grove,
And mirrored in the wanderer's heart, immortalize its love!

III.

I gaze upon the stranger's face—I tread on foreign ground,
And almost deem Enchantment's wand hath raised up all around:—
My spirit may not mingle yet with scenes so wild and strange,
And keeps in scorn of fleshly bonds its old accustomed range.

IV.

In that sweet hour when Fancy's spell inebriates the brain,
And breathing forms to phantoms turn, and lost friends live again,
Oh! what a dear delirious joy unlocks the source of tears
While like unprisoned birds we seek the haunts of happier years.

MOODS OF MIND.

I.

A SUDDEN gloom came o'er me ;
A gathering throng of fears
Enshrouded all before me,
And through the mist of tears
I saw the coming years.

II.

'Tis strange how transient sorrow
Can mortal sight delude ;
To-day is dark—to-morrow
Shall no dull shade intrude
To tinge a brighter mood.

III.

I heard the low winds sighing
Above the cheerless earth,
And deem'd the hope of dying
Was all that life was worth,
And scoffed at human mirth.

IV.

From that wild dream awaking,
And through the clouds of care
A mental sunshine breaking,
I marvelled how despair
Could haunt a world so fair.

SONNET.

TO A FRIEND IN LOVE.

Believe me, dearest friend, 'twere nobler far
To scorn the prize for which thy soul hath yearned,
Than tamely feed a passion proudly spurned
By one whom thou hast worshipped as a star.
Oh! live not thus eternally at war
With loftier hopes! Before thy young veins burned
With love's sweet poison, who like thee discerned
The glad earth's glory, or so laughed at care?
Arrest then quickly this delirious fever,
Nor breathe again an unavailing sigh;
Forget a cold, disdainful heart for ever;
Seek the green meadows and the mountains high
And crystal rivers. Feast thine amorous eye
On Nature's charms, for she repulseth never.

SONNET—MORNING.

When to my fevered brain, the long drear night
No balm hath brought, and restless and alone
I've paced the silent fields, till glittering bright
O'er the green orient mount the fresh day shone;
How have I joyed to mark yon hoary Tower
Unfolding slowly, 'neath the morning beams,
His misty mantle grey!—In such an hour,
To Contemplation's eye glad Nature seems
Most holy,—and the troubled heart is still.—
The vocal grove, the sky-reflecting lake,
The cheerful plain, and softly-shadowed hill,
To loftier dreams are ministrant, and wake
Unutterable love for this fair Earth,
And silent bliss, more exquisite than mirth.

ON GOING HOME.

[WRITTEN IN INDIA, JANUARY, 1835.]

The Hooghly is now covered with the stately ships of England. It is the season for *going home!* They whom fortune has blessed, and whose term of exile is expired, are anticipating the joy of once more greeting the faces of early friends, and the green hills and valleys on which the morning of existence shed its cheerful light. They are preparing for an eventful but happy change. They are entering upon a fresh chapter of the book of life. Oh! with what yearning hearts do we turn to those yet unread pages to which the finger of Hope directs us! I hear around me many voices that speak of home and happiness. I shall soon cease to hear them—perhaps for ever! They will pass, like the wind, into happier regions, and breathe in other ears their old familiar music. The fate of these emancipated exiles awakens no ungenerous feeling in my heart, and yet it aches with sorrow when I listen to their home-anticipations. *They* are intoxicated with delight, while *I* sicken with despair. They are like boys at school when their long-looked-for holidays have arrived. But he who still lingers on this distant shore, is like an unhappy child who remains in the same dreary and detested place, when his more fortunate playmates have departed homewards.

But amidst all the pleasurable excitements that stir the heart of the exile when about to revisit his native land, there are moments of occasional thoughtfulness and sadness and apprehension which render his fate far less enviable than that of the home-returning school-boy. The spirit of the latter is bright and buoyant. His hopes are unclouded, his pleasure is unalloyed.

The former, on the other hand, has seen too much of human life to trust entirely to its enchantments. He is afraid of his own happiness. He can scarcely believe it real or well founded. It is too like a dream. There is something strange and ominous in the unaccustomed elation of his heart, and he varies and mingles his emotions like a child that laughs and cries in the same breath. These mixed feelings are sometimes succeeded by an unqualified mistrust and forlorn forebodings. He reverts to the innumerable disappointments that have already darkened his path, and arrives at a reluctant conviction that it is weak and unreasonable to imagine that the course of life can alter. As in the natural world the frequent interchange of sunshine and of shadow forbids us to anticipate the long duration of pleasant weather, so his past experience of human life leads him to regard all prospects of true and lasting happiness as idle dreams. He has reached too many of those once distant scenes, so gorgeously clad in colors of the air, to trust again to the soft illusions which fade at our approach. He has learnt that the many-tinted bow of heaven is nothing but the junction of light and vapour, and that the scenes that charm us afar off

To those who journey near
Barren, brown, and rough appear!

In this mistrustful mood of mind a thousand melancholy images rise up before him. Instead of the bright countenances of the living he sees the shrouded faces of the dead. The forms that cheered his childhood and smiled upon his later dreams are enveloped in the shadows of the grave. His early home is empty — the hearth of his infancy is cold! The sweet flower-garden, in which he once toiled with eager pleasure beneath the summer sun, is now a dreary wilderness. Or if the halls and lands of his fathers are not lonely and neglected, they are perhaps in the possession of the stranger, and his own birth-place is like a scene

in a foreign land. He recalls the beautiful Arabic exclamation—"I came to the place of my youth and cried, my friends, where are they? and Echo answered, *where are they?*" Even Nature herself seems changed. The once familiar hills and valleys have a strange look, like the face of an altered friend. He has heard, but too often, of such miserable mutations and disappointments, and he trembles as he reflects that his own fancy may prove prophetic. Besides all these gloomy fears and meditations, there are other drawbacks to that felicity which the home-seeking exile might enjoy if he were more sanguine and less reflective. He has perhaps formed many friendships with his fellow-countrymen in India, and it is impossible to break social ties, however slight, without some degree of sadness and regret. In the case of long-tried and faithful friendships the parting hour—especially when the separation is probably an eternal one—is a dreadful trial. In the latter case it is like the farewell we take of the dying. Our last affectionate look on a familiar face is accompanied with a feeling that it is impossible to describe. The lowest depths of the human heart are stirred, and that convulsive movement with which we tear ourselves away for ever from the dear associates of many years seems to wrench some palpable and necessary support, and leave us bare and lacerated. Even the very spots that we have long wished to quit are hallowed when the time of parting is arrived. Like old acquaintances who had once but little of our love, or perhaps even something of our hatred, they present at such a moment a softer aspect, and we almost wonder that we should ever have regarded them with coldness or dislike. They have become a portion of our associations, and these, of whatever nature they may be, can hardly pass through the mists of memory without receiving that tender and dream-like hue which makes the past so precious. The coldest and coarsest mind is touched and elevated on such occasions. The finest points of our common nature are then developed; and never is the human

countenance so informed with beauty, with intellect and with sensibility, as in parting for ever from old friends and familiar scenes. At such a time every one is a poet, and looks upon human life and external nature with a deep and solemn feeling. They who are apt in ordinary seasons to take a literal and vulgar view of all things, assume a higher tone, and see something to feel, to admire, and to cherish beyond the range of their daily thoughts and avocations.

But let us pass over the trial of separation, and trace the after progress of the friends who leave us. The hurry and excitement of embarkation, and the novelty of their position, are circumstances well calculated to shorten the pain of parting, and give a fresh impulse to the mind. When they are once fairly launched on the wide blue ocean, the relief from all common cares and duties—the holiday feeling—the exultation of spirit occasioned by a change of air and scene—all dispose them to give a ready welcome to cheerful thoughts, and to banish every unpleasing recollection. Then grave men become as frolicksome as children, and take a deep interest in those trifles and amusements which during their long weary exile and amidst far higher cares were either forgotten or despised. They seem as if they had taken a new lease of life. The fountain of early pleasure is unlocked. Their first fresh feelings return upon their hearts, and they become as frank and social, and as sanguine and as willing to be pleased, as in the generous ardor of their boyhood. Each new occurrence in their progress—a change of wind or weather—the capture of a fish or bird—the discovery of a ship, like a speck of cloud on the far horizon—a dinner or a dance with the strangers, when the two little oaken worlds in the vast space of waters, arrive in contact—the touching at some small uninhabited island, as solitary and romantic as the residence of Robinson Crusoe—and finally the first pale glimmering of the snow-white cliffs of Albion, make their hearts bound within them, and they feel as they have often thought that they should never feel again!

As they approach the shores hallowed by so many early associations and of which they have thought and dreamt for so many years, with what tumultuous eagerness they crowd into the first boat that reaches the vessel's side! At last they leap upon their native earth; and they who mix reflection with their transport, look back with grateful wonder at their escapes by land and sea, and rejoice in the consummation of their long cherished hopes.

No language could paint the feelings with which those Indian parents who have sent children home at an early age hurry from the sea-port town at which they land, to embrace again their living treasures! The first excess of joy at such a meeting may border upon pain; but when the deep and wild emotion begins to moderate, there is no earthly felicity with which it could be compared. It is almost a compensation for the pangs of parting, and the miseries of exile.

SONNET—WRITTEN IN INDIA.

The scene is sweetly changed! The lord of day
No longer wears the countenance of pride
That seared the green earth's breast! A veil doth hide
The lustre of his brow; his parting ray,
As some fond lover's smile that melts away
Through farewell tears, is fading tenderly!
And gorgeous clouds, like banners floating free,
But dimmed by distance, soften into grey!
Now, like a shadowy form, whose beauty steals
O'er the rapt soul in visionary hours,
Meek Twilight comes! From zephyr-haunted bowers
Arise the tuneful Shama's evening peals,
Blent with the far wave's murmur, and the songs
Of village maids, that Echo's voice prolongs.

LINES TO A LADY

WHO PRESENTED THE AUTHOR WITH SOME ENGLISH FRUITS AND FLOWERS.

Green herbs and gushing springs in some hot waste,
Though grateful to the traveller's sight and taste,
Seem far less fair and fresh than fruits and flowers
That breathe, in foreign lands, of English bowers.
Thy gracious gift, dear Lady, well recalls
Sweet scenes of home,—the white cot's trellised walls—
The clean red garden path—the rustic seat—
The jasmine-covered arbour, fit retreat
For hearts that love repose. Each spot displays
Some long-remembered charm. In sweet amaze
I feel as one who from a weary dream
Of exile wakes, and sees the morning beam
Illume the glorious clouds, of every hue,
That float o'er fields his happy childhood knew.

How small a spark may kindle fancy's flame,
And light up all the past! The very same
Glad sounds and sights that charmed my heart of old,
Arrest me now—I hear them and behold.
Ah! yonder is the happy circle seated
Within the favourite bower! I am greeted
With joyous shouts; my rosy boys have heard
A father's voice—their little hearts are stirred
With eager hope of some new toy or treat,
And on they rush with never-resting feet!

* * * * * * * *

Gone is the sweet illusion—like a scene
Formed by the western vapours, when between
The dusky earth and day's departing light,
The curtain falls of India's sudden night.

MENTAL CHANGES.

As o'er the fairest skies
The dream-like shadows steal,
So dim mysterious cares surprize
The heart whose human weal
Would seem secure from aught less bright
Than pleasure's broad congenial light.

As when this outward world
Attracts the mortal eye,
A vapour on the light air curled
Between us and the sky
May make its blue depths cold and dun,
And place in brief eclipse the sun;

So in the realms of mind,
The meanest things have power,
With thoughts as wayward as the wind
When fitful tempests lour,
The loveliest hues of life to cloud,
And Hope's resplendent orb enshroud.

SONNETS—WRITTEN AT SEA.

[FINE WEATHER.]

THE plain of ocean 'neath the crystal air
Its azure bound extends—the circle wide
Is sharply clear,—contrasted hues divide
The sky and water. Clouds, like hills that wear
The winter's snow-wrought mantle, brightly fair,
Rest on the main's blue marge. As shadows glide
O'er dew-decked fields, the calm ship seems to slide
O'er glassy paths that catch the noon-tide glare
As if bestrown with diamonds. Quickly play
The small crisp waves that musically break
Their shining peaks.—And now, if aught can make
Celestial spirits wing their downward way,
Methinks they glitter in the proud sun's wake,
And breathe a glorious beauty on the day!

[A CALM, AFTER A GALE.]

LIKE mountain-mists that roll on sultry airs,
Unheard and slow the huge waves heave around
That lately roared in wrath. The storm-fiend, bound
Within his unseen cave, no longer tears
The vexed and wearied main. The moon appears,
Uncurtaining wide her azure realms profound
To cheer the sullen night. Though not a sound
Reposing Nature breathes, my rapt soul hears
The far-off murmur of my native streams
Like music from the stars—the silver tone
Is memory's lingering echo. Ocean's zone
Infolds me from the past;—this small bark seems
The centre of a world—an island lone;
And home's dear forms are like departed dreams!

ON THE FREQUENT COMPLAINT OF A WANT OF MEMORY.

NOTHING is more common than the confession of a defect of memory, which may be taken as a proof that it is not generally considered one of the nobler faculties of the mind. Men rarely acknowledge, even to themselves, a deficiency in any quality which ranks highly in their own estimation, or which they suppose to be essential to the dignity or grace of their intellectual character. People sometimes complain of the want of extrinsic advantages, such as a large income or a handsome equipage, because these things form no portion of their own moral or mental being. They conceive that they have higher and less equivocal claims to the respect of their fellow creatures; and while railing at Fortune, enjoy a secret consciousness, and sometimes even venture on a pretty open implication, that their merit is deserving of a better fate. Men are discontented with every thing but their own minds and persons. They never complain that nature has made them silly or ill-featured. In some respects what a happy circumstance is that law of our nature by which, with the clearest eyes for the defects of others, we are blinded to our own! The feeble-minded and the deformed in body would shrink into themselves with bitter shame and forlorn despondency, if they were to see their own deficiencies as they appear to others. The perpetual mirror of self-reflection would drive them to despair. It is remarkable that in proportion as nature is niggard in real gifts, she is liberal in those of fancy. Fools and dwarfs are proverbially vain. When we consider how much of the happiness of life depends upon our being well deceived, it is perhaps scarcely

consistent with a humane philosophy to object to the self-complacency of the meanest human creature in existence, especially as he is in no degree answerable for his natural defects. If we lower a man in his own esteem we not only deprive him of the chief source of consolation amidst the positive ills of life, but render him less capable of a noble sentiment or a generous exertion. It is only when egotism leads to selfishness and arrogance, that it becomes necessary to repress it. The principle, however, of self-approval is so deeply ingrafted in our system, that it is impossible to eradicate it. By terribly severe and caustic handling its growth may be checked for a season, but it cannot be utterly destroyed. The cherished weed shoots out again in defiance of every obstacle, and with renewed force and freshness.

As no man wilfully depreciates his own character in matters which he thinks materially affect its influence over others, the frequent complaint of the want of memory is, as I have already intimated, rather a slight to that faculty than an acknowledgment of its value. People are often ready to resign all pretensions to it for the praise of candour, because they think they can well afford the sacrifice. A weakness in this faculty is not thought any indication of a correspondent weakness in the higher powers of the mind. On the contrary, many persons have a notion that an exact and vigorous memory is generally associated with a feeble judgment and a cold and barren imagination. Pope has sanctioned this opinion in his Essay on Criticism.

"Thus in the soul while memory prevails
The solid power of understanding fails;
Where beams of warm imagination play
The memory's soft figures melt away."

Those who have weak memories and who wish to be reconciled to their misfortune, should peruse Montaigne, who is perpetu-

ally informing his readers of his singular incapability of mental retention. No one will dispute the acuteness and power of that most delightful Essayist; and indeed it is sufficiently obvious, notwithstanding all his lamentations on the subject of his memory, that he is by no means dissatisfied with the general character of his own intellect. Montaigne's Confessions, for such his Essays may be called as justly as the egotistical ebullitions of Rousseau, may be adduced as a proof of the utter impossibility of a man's regarding himself with any thing like that genuine impartiality of judgment with which he may be regarded by others. He never tells us any thing which he thinks will really injure him greatly in our estimation. Every little error is eagerly followed up by some redeeming virtue. It is true that both Montaigne and Rousseau have dared to communicate to the world several confessedly mean and ludicrous passages in their history; but this may have been done partly with a proud consciousness that their characters would not suffer by such comparative sun-specks, and partly to obtain the more credit for their self-commendations. Still, however, Montaigne's egotism is nearly as candid as is possible to human nature, and he often seems more likely to have deceived himself than to have had any intention to deceive his readers. His constant complaint of a want of memory has been thought the more remarkable on account of the quantity of anecdotes and quotations that crowd his pages. They are almost as full of learned illustrations as Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. His French editor, however, (Peter Coste) has explained this apparent contradiction. In the first place he is said to have fallen into innumerable errors respecting names, dates, and persons, and in the next place he appears to have added illustration after illustration to his Essays while in manuscript, and for every new edition, just as he met with suitable materials in the course of his extensive reading. Montaigne expresses much the same opinion of the faculty of

memory as Pope does. "In my country," says the former, "when they would signify that a man is void of sense, they say that he has no memory; and when I complain of this defect of mine they reprove me, and do not think I am in earnest in accusing myself of being a fool; for they do not discern the difference betwixt memory and understanding, in which they make me worse than I really am; for, on the contrary, we rather find by experience that *a strong memory is liable to be accompanied with a weak judgment.*" He consoles himself, in a very characteristic way, with the reflection, that in proportion to the extent of this defect of memory the more powerful are his other faculties. He remarks also that if his memory had been better, he would have been apt to rest his understanding and judgment on the wisdom of other men, instead of exerting his own natural powers.

I cannot help thinking, that Montaigne and Pope* have mistaken the nature of memory in its connection with other faculties of the mind. It is to be doubted whether any great powers of intellect are consistent with a feeble memory. This faculty was personified by the ancients as the mother of the Muses. Even Montaigne himself, in alluding to the anecdote of Messala Corvinus having been two years without any trace of memory, observes that a privation of this faculty, if absolute, must destroy all the functions of the soul. He also quotes the saying of Cicero, that "the memory is the receptacle and sheath of all science." Rogers has paid it a similar compliment.

"Ages and climes remote to thee impart
What charms in genius and refines in art;
Thee, in whose hands the keys of science dwell,
The pensive Portress of her holy cell."

* Pope himself had an excellent memory. It was "so tenacious and local, that he could directly refer to any particular passage in a favorite author."

Montaigne did injustice to his own memory*. He only reckoned his sins of forgetfulness, and did not balance them with his remembrances. He tells us that he was accustomed to forget the names of his servants, and those domestic matters which every body around him remembered with the utmost ease and distinctness. He did not consider how many things there were which *he* remembered and which *they* forgot. Men of genius forget things which the vulgar remember, and remember those which leave no impression on ordinary minds. The poet who in ten minutes will forget where he has placed his hat and walking stick, will remember in what book he met with a beautiful sentiment or expression ten years ago. He has a better memory than those who laugh at his forgetfulness, but it is employed on subjects with which they are not familiar. People remember only those things in which they take an interest. The trader remembers the state of the market, the poet the state of literature. Let them exchange the subject of their attention, and they will both complain of a want of memory. Scott† is said to have possessed extraordinary pow-

* Marmontel observes, in his Memoirs, that he had a great desire to learn, but nature had refused him the gift of memory. He admits, however, that though *the words* left no trace upon his mind, he retained the *sense* of what he read.

Rousseau repeatedly complains of his want of memory. But he exaggerated the defect; for no man with such a feeble memory as he represents his own to have been, could have gathered and retained a fiftieth part of his knowledge.

† Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, gives a curious proof of Scott's retentiveness. I take the following from the Shepherd's "Familiar Anecdotes." "He, and Skene of Rubislaw, and I were out one night about midnight, leistering kippers in Tweed, about the end of January, not long after the opening of the river for fishing, which was then on the tenth, and Scott having a great range of the river himself, we went up to the side of the Rough-haugh of Elibank; but when we came to kindle our light, behold our peat was gone out. This was a terrible disappointment, but to think of giving up our sport was out of the question, so we had no other shift save to send Rob Fletcher all the way through the darkness, the distance of two miles, for another fiery peat.

The night was mild, calm, and as dark as pitch, and while Fletcher was absent we three sat down on the brink of the river, on a little green sward which I never shall forget, and Scott desired me to sing them my ballad of "Gilman's

ers of retention—but what were the things that he most easily retained?—specimens of his own favorite art. He doubtless forgot other matters that interested him less, in the same way that a dull prosaic man would remember the most dry details and forget the most delightful verses. In Scott's Autobiography, (published by Lockhart,) he thus speaks of his memory—"But this memory of mine was a very fickle ally, and has through my whole life acted upon its own capricious motions, and might have enabled me to adopt old Beattie of Mickledale's answer, when complimented by a reverend divine on the strength of the same faculty;—"No, Sir," answered the old borderer, "I have no command of my memory. It only retains what hits my fancy, and, probably, Sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I should not be able when you finished to remember a word you had been saying."

Scaliger tells us that in his youth he could repeat 100 verses after having once read them. It is said that Dr. Leyden had so strong a memory, that he could repeat correctly a long Act of Parliament or any similar document after a single perusal. There is an anecdote of an English gentleman, whom the king of Prussia placed behind a screen, when Voltaire came to read him a new poem of considerable length. The gentleman afterwards perplexed the poet by asserting that the poem was his, and repeated it word for word as a proof of the truth of his assertion. Locke in

cleuch." Now, be it remembered, that this ballad had never been printed. I had merely composed it by rote, and, on finishing it three years before, had sung it once over to Sir Walter. I began it, at his request, but at the eighth or ninth stanza I stuck in it, and could not get on with another verse, on which he began it again, and recited it every word from beginning to end. It being a very long ballad, consisting of eighty-eight stanzas, I testified my astonishment, knowing that he had never heard it but once, and even then did not appear to be paying particular attention. He said he had been out with a pleasure party as far as the opening of the Frith of Forth, and, to amuse the company, he had recited both that ballad and one of Southey's (The Abbot of Aberbrothock), both of which ballads he had only heard once from their respective authors, and he believed he recited them both without misplacing a word."

his description of memory (which description, as Campbell justly observes*, is "absolutely poetical"), mentions that it is recorded of "that prodigy of parts, Monsieur Pascal, that till the decay of his health had impaired his memory, he forgot nothing of what he had done, read, or thought in any part of his rational age." It is said that the admirable Crichton was similarly gifted, and could repeat backwards any speech he had made. Magliabecchi, the Florentine Librarian, could recollect whole volumes, and once supplied an author from memory with a copy of his own work of which the original was lost. Spence records the observation of Pope, that Bolingbroke had so great a memory that if he was alone and without books, he could refer to a particular subject in them, and write as fully on it, as another man would with all his books about him. Woodfall's extraordinary power of reporting the debates in the House of Commons without the aid of written memoranda is well known. During a debate he used to close his eyes and lean with both hands upon his stick, resolutely excluding all extraneous associations. The accuracy and precision of his reports brought his newspaper into great repute. He would retain a full recollection of a particular debate a fortnight after it had occurred, and during the intervention of other debates. He used to say that it was put by in a corner of his mind for future reference.

It seems sometimes more easy to exert the memory than to suppress it. "We may remember," says Felton, "what we are intent upon; but with all the art we can use we cannot know-

* The following passage bears out Campbell's praise—"The mind very often sets itself on work in search of some hidden idea, and turns as it were the eye of the soul upon it; though sometimes too they start up in our minds of their own accord, and offer themselves to the understanding; and very often *are roused and tumbled out of their dark cells into open day-light by turbulent and tempestuous passions*, our affections bringing ideas to our memory, which had otherwise lain quiet and unregarded."

ingly forget what we would.—Nor is there any Ætna in the soul of man but what the memory makes*."

Mere abstraction, or what is called absence of mind, is often attributed very unphilosophically to a want of memory. I believe it was La Fontaine who in a dreaming mood forgot his own child, and after warmly commending him, observed how proud he should be to have such a son. In this kind of abstraction external things are either only dimly seen or are utterly overlooked; but the memory is not necessarily asleep. In fact, its too intense activity is frequently the cause of the abstraction. This faculty is usually the strongest, when the other faculties are in their prime; and fades in old age, when there is a general decay of mind and body. Old men, indeed, are proverbially narrative, and from this circumstance it sometimes appears as if the memory preserves a certain portion of its early acquisitions to the last, though in the general failure of the intellect, it loses its active energy. It receives no new impressions, but old ones are confirmed. The brain seems to grow *harder*. Old images become *fixtures*.

It is a stale proverb that great wits have short memories, and that small wits have long ones. Truth demands, however, that the saying should be reversed. It is not to be denied that extraordinary powers of memory have been often found in the possession of the dullest minds. Jedidiah Buxton, after seeing Garrick perform, was asked what he thought of the player and the play. "Oh," he said, "he did not know, he had only seen a little man strut about the stage and repeat 7956 words." He could remember the number of words, because he took an interest in numerical calculations; but he forgot the poetry, and saw nothing in the

Of all afflictions taught a lover yet
'Tis sure the hardest science to forget.

Pope.

actor's art. So there are men who recollect dates and names, and forget things and persons. When a mind of very inferior range concentrates its whole power in the faculty of memory, and exerts that faculty on some peculiar class of objects, those observers will inevitably be puzzled who do not sufficiently connect the result with the process by which it is effected.

Nemonica, or the art of memory, was studied by some of the ancients, and an attempt has lately been made to revive it. Mr. Feinaigle, a German, gave instruction in this art in Paris about the beginning of the present century; and as a reply to hostile critics he exhibited the progress of fifteen of his pupils. After they had been tried in various ways, one of the pupils desired the company to give him "a thousand words without any connection whatsoever and without numerical order; for instance the word *astronomer,* for No. 62; *wood,* for No. 188; *lovely,* for No. 370; *dynasty,* for No. 23; *David,* for No. 90; &c. &c. till all the numbers were filled; and he repeated the whole (though he heard these words without order and but once) in the numerical order; or he told what word was given against any one number, or what number any one word bore." But a system of arbitrary association or artificial memory, though it may serve to prove how much a particular faculty is capable of improvement, is more plausible than useful; for to cultivate any one power of the mind to such an extreme degree, is to destroy the balance of the intellectual powers. To be the brilliant pupil of a Feinaigle a man must give up every other object, and improve one of his faculties at the expense of all the rest. Fuller advises us not to overburthen the memory, and not to make so faithful a servant a slave. "Remember," says he, that "Atlas was weary. Have as much reason as a camel, to rise when thou hast thy full load. Memory is like a purse, if it be over-full that it cannot shut, all will drop out." The same writer makes a ludicrous observation that "Philosophers place memory in the rear of the

head; and it seems the mine of memory lies there, because, there men naturally dig for it, scratching it when they are at a loss." People as often strike the forehead under the same circumstances.

If men who complain of feeble powers of retention were to cultivate their memory with the same assiduity with which they cultivate their other faculties, they would soon find that it would keep an equal pace with the general advance of the mind. Few people have given it a fair trial, and still fewer know the extent to which it may be invigorated and improved. William Hutton divided a blank book into 365 columns, and resolved, as an experiment, to recollect, if possible, an anecdote of his past life, to fill up each division. He was astonished at the success of his plan, and contrived to fill up 355 columns with his different reminiscences. What a delightful treasure are such recovered relics of the past! What a triumph over time! It is a kind of immortality. Without memory, life would be a daily death; and would be not more brief than desolate. How ignorantly then has this faculty been undervalued! It is as it were the very foundation of genius. Wit and fancy are furnished by the memory with the materials for analogy, combination, or contrast. It is also more closely connected with the imaginative faculty than is generally supposed, and is sometimes even unconsciously confounded with it. People are as apt to say that they *fancy* they see a particular object as that they *remember* it.

The past is tinged with a soft twilight lustre. It is this colouring which makes it seem so much more delightful than the present.

'Tis *distance* lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the mountain in its azure hue.

The far-off landscape is not more lovely to the corporeal sight than are distant objects to the inward eye. They are alike steeped in beauty. But the divine power of memory is incomparably more precious than the pleasures of external vision. It is inde-

pendent of time and place. It is like a fairy enchanter, and can conjure up spring flowers in a wintry desert, and reflect a magic light on the dreariest moments of existence. It resembles, in some respects, a glorious instrument which requires but a single air-like touch and its "linked sweetness, long drawn out," enthrals the soul with ineffable delight. Its rich music is like a river "that wanders at its own sweet will" through some romantic valley.

Mr. Rogers has beautifully described the associating principle;

> "Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain,
> Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain.
> Awake but one, and lo, what myriads rise!"

They who call themselves practical philosophers, and talk with contempt of the pleasures of imagination, are strangely ignorant of our nature. The *literal* forms an extremely small and by far the least precious portion of our enjoyments. The past and the future are but dreams. Even the present is rife with doubt, mystery and delusion, and the few dull objects that remain uncoloured with the hues of imagination are scarcely worthy of a thought. All men complain of the shortness of life, but a cold and dry philosophy would make it shorter still. It would confine its limits to the passing moment, that dies even in its birth; for it is only in such a pitiful span that the little which is really *literal* in life can at all exist. That moment's predecessor is dead—its successor is unborn—and all that is actual or material in its own existence is as a drop in the ocean, or as a grain of sand on the sea-shore.

A supposed want of memory is often nothing more than a want of method. Desultory readers and thinkers generally complain of imperfect memories. The reason is, that their thoughts are in a state of chaos. Thus Montaigne, who was irregular and capricious in his studies, though his memory was probably natu-

rally a good one, was perplexed with vague and confused remembrances. Those who run from one subject to another of the most opposite and uncongenial kinds, receive of course, but very imperfect and transitory impressions. Southey, though an imaginative writer, does not complain of want of memory, because he is singularly regular and methodical in his studies. Coleridge may have done so, because his thoughts were dream-like and indistinct; but he no doubt recollected the wildest visions and most romantic tales with greater strength and facility than the generality of mankind, though he could not perhaps have carried a domestic pecuniary account in his head from one street to another. When a man finds that he forgets those things in which he takes a deep interest and which other persons who take less interest in them remember, he may then—but not till then, complain of want of memory. But as no man can remember all things, he must be satisfied to confine the exertions of his memory within a chosen range, and to retain only those things which are the dearest to his heart and the most congenial to his mind.

A MOONLIGHT ASSIGNATION.

[A FRAGMENT.]

> "Where is the nymph whose azure eye
> Can shine through rapture's tear?
> The sun is sunk, the moon is high,
> And yet she comes not here."
>
> *Moore.*

HAIL to the lovely Queen of Night,
In all her chastened glory dight!
How sweet her mild yet regal mien!
How rich her realms of starry sheen!
No threatening shades her brows enshroud,
Her veil is of the fleecy cloud;—
She rules o'er scenes of love and light,
Calmly blest and purely bright,
And the beam is soft of her pensive eye,
As she looks from her silver throne on high!

Now Solitude, meek timid maid!
Is stealing from the birchen glade,
And as she leaves her silent cell,
Beneath the light she loveth well,
She startles at the rustling trees,
And the plaintive voice of the sad night-breeze,
And the music wild of the restless stream
Glimmering in the lunar beam!

Ye radiant stars! and thou, sweet moon,
That oft have heard at night's still noon
Her vows of love, Oh, say if e'er,
Ye aught could doubt that maiden fair,

Or Echo's tremulous voice reply
To sweeter sounds of melody!

But oh! your rays begin to fade,
And absent still the faithless maid
Than ye, proud host of stars! more bright,
Or even thou, fair Queen of Night!
*   *   *   *   *   *   *
The Spirit of Morn advances near,
And all the neighbouring grove doth cheer!
Before her form of holy light
Off glide the dream-like shades of night!

Maid of my heart! oh, why so long?
The nightingale hath ceased its song,
The speckled lark ascends the sky
To hail the morn's bright majesty,
The mavis and merle are gaily singing,
And the woods with their joyous matins are ringing!

Is it Fancy's vision wild?
Is Reason from my soul exiled?
Is it Hope's delusive beam?
Is it Love's delirious dream?

Oh, rapturous joy! 'Twas her I love
Whose advent waked the vocal grove,
Whose form a fresh radiance of beauty adorning,
I deemed in my madness the spirit of Morning!

A LOVER'S THOUGHT.

'Tis true that we no more may meet,
Our paths are far apart,
I may not hear thy lips repeat
The dictates of thine heart ;—
Yet though divided thus we stray,
We share love's golden dream,
As 'neath the same unbroken ray
The clouds, though parted, gleam !

SONNET.

WRITTEN ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES.

How fraught with music, beauty and repose,
This holy time, and solitude profound !
The lingering day along the mountain glows ;
With songs of birds the twilight woods resound.
Through the soft gloom, yon sacred fanes around,
The radiant fly* its mimic lightning throws ;
Fair Gunga's stream along the green vale flows,
And gently breathes a thought-awakening sound !
Such hour and scene my spirit loves to hail,
When nature's smile is so divinely sweet—
When every note that trembles on the gale,
Seems caught from realms untrod by mortal feet—
Where everlasting harmonies prevail—
Where rise the purified, their God to greet !

* The Fire-fly.

SONNET—EVENING AT SEA.

How calm and beautiful! The broad sun now
Behind its rosy curtain lingering stays,
Yet downward and above the glorious rays
Pierce the blue flood, and in the warm air glow;
While clouds from either side, like pillars, throw
Their long gigantic shadows o'er the main;—
Between their dusky bounds, like golden rain,
Though still the sun-beams on the wave below
A shower of radiance shed, the misty veil
Of twilight spreads around—the orient sky
Is mingling with the sea—the distant sail
Hangs like a dim-discovered cloud on high,
And faintly bears the cold unearthly ray
Of yon pale moon, that seems the ghost of day!

SONNET—TO A CHILD.

Thou lovely child! When I behold the smile
Over thy rosy features brightly play,
As darts on rippling waves the morning ray,
Thy fair and open brow upraised the while,
Untouched by withering fears of worldly guile,
Nor taught the trusting bosom to betray,—
Thy sinless graces win my soul away
From dreams and thoughts that darken and defile!
Scion of Beauty! If a stranger's eye
Thus linger on thee—if his bosom's pain
Charmed by thy cherub looks forget to smart—
Oh! how unutterably sweet *her* joy!
Oh! how indissolubly firm the chain,
That binds, with links of love, thy *Mother's* heart!

IMITATIVE HARMONY.

'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense.
Pope's Essay on Criticism.*

'Tis not enough his verses to complete
In measure, numbers, or determined feet;
Or render things by clear expression bright,
And set each object in a proper light:
To all proportioned terms he must dispense,
And make the sound a picture of the sense.
Pitt's Translation of Vida's Art of Poetry.

DOCTOR Johnson has remarked, that "the notion of imitative metre, and the desire of discovering frequent adaptations of the sound to the sense, have produced many wild conceits and imaginary beauties." The truth of this observation does not overthrow the critical canon which Pope has rendered so familiar. As well might the occasional failures of the painter, or the mistaken interpretations of different judges, be adduced as an argu-

* In Spence's Anecdotes, Pope's remarks on this subject are thus reported:— "I have followed the significance of the numbers, and the adapting them to the sense, much more even than Dryden, and much oftener than any one minds it. Particularly in the translations of Homer, where 'twas most necessary to do so; and in the Dunciad, often, and indeed in all my poems. The great rule of verse is to be musical; this other is only a secondary consideration, and should not jar too much with the former. I remember two lines I wrote, when I was a boy, that were very faulty this way. 'Twas on something that I was to describe as passing away as quick as thought:—

So swift—this moment here, the next 'tis gone,
So imperceptible the motion.

ment against the existence or value of some peculiar and subtle beauty in the pictorial art. It is not every spectator who understands the expression of Raphael's faces. When a pedantic coxcomb was lauding that great artist to the skies, in the presence of Northcote, the latter could not help saying, "If there was nothing in Raphael but what *you* can see, we should not now be talking of him."

The effect of Imitative Harmony in verse is generally best appreciated by a learned ear and a cultivated taste; but it is in some instances of so palpable a character as to be perceptible to the dullest reader, though he is not perhaps able to explain the cause. Imitative harmony in verse is not a modern discovery or invention. Homer has been celebrated as the poet, who of all others exhibited the happiest adaptation of sense to sound. Vida, in his Art of Poetry, has illustrated Virgil's great excellence in this respect. In point of fact, the art of selecting sounds expressive of things is resorted to even in common conversation. All good Poets, and even Orators, attend more or less closely to the rule in question, though often quite unconsciously. The passions naturally suggest fit and faithful sounds. Love and sorrow prompt smooth and melodious expressions, and violent emotions obtain utterance in words harsh, hurried, and abrupt. We see therefore that this critical canon is founded in nature. It is not, however, to be denied, that like many other good rules we may make a great deal too much of it; for a too eager and ambitious attempt to copy nature in this respect may lead to a total want of it; as those writers who are pathetic or passionate on system become mawkish and ridiculous. The poet should trust wholly to his genuine impulses, unless he have art enough to hide his art, which comes after all to the same thing, for the perfection of art is nature.

Those readers who are not already familiar with Christopher Pitt's translation of Vida would do well to turn to it, if they feel

any interest in the subject of this paper*. Pitt was not a poet. He wanted fancy and passion; but he was a classical scholar and a correct and skilful versifier. His translation of the Æneid, though greatly inferior to Dryden's, has been praised by Johnson, and his Vida's Art of Poetry was once popular. It is curious to compare his translation of Vida with those passages which Pope has imitated in his Essay on Criticism. The following is one of the most celebrated examples of imitative harmony in the English language:—

Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow;
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er the unbending corn and skims along the main.

Pope's Essay on Criticism.

Let us compare these lines with the translation of the correspondent passage in Vida:—

When things are small, the terms should still be so,
For low words please us when the theme is low.
But when some giant, horrible and grim,
Enormous in his gait, and vast in every limb,
Comes towering on; the swelling words must rise
In just proportion to the monster's size.
If some large weight his huge arms strive to shove
The verse too labours; the thronged words scarce move.
When each stiff clod beneath the ponderous plough
Crumbles and breaks, th' encumbered lines march slow.

* Or they may go to the Latin original, which Pope seems to have read with great delight. He has paid the author a handsome tribute of admiration.

Immortal Vida! on whose honored brow
The poet's bays and critic's ivy grow!
Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,
As next in place to Mantua, next in fame!

Not less, when pilots catch the friendly gales,
Unfurl their shrouds and hoist the wide-stretched sails.
But if the poem suffer from delay
Let the lines fly precipitate away;
And when the viper issues from the brake,
Be quick: with stones, and brands, and fire attack
His rising crest, and drive the serpent back.

Pitt's Vida.

Some of the lines in italics are so admirable, that I cannot help preferring them to those of Pope. The overflowing of the second italic line, as if the object were too vast for the usual limit of the verse, and the abrupt yet sonorous termination in the middle of the third line, are contrived with exquisite skill and judgment. The rapidity of the last four lines is also a highly successful exertion of poetical art, and is greatly superior to Pope's illustration of quick motion. His last long lumbering line is any thing but expressive of extreme swiftness, and as Johnson has rightly observed, the word *unbending* is one of the most sluggish in the language. The line gives an idea of space, but not of celerity. How superior, as an example of quickness, is the following:—

Let the lines fly precipitate away.

And how exceedingly felicitous is the pause at "*Be quick*"—and the eager enumeration of the means of destruction!

But in the illustration of *smoothness* and of *toil,* Pope is very superior to Pitt, and he also exhibits a great advantage over him in the general elegance and finish of his performance. Pitt has been obliged to borrow several of Pope's expressions, and some of his own are wretchedly prosaic. "*Strive to shove,*" for instance, is detestable. The ensuing couplets are not to be compared to the first four lines in the extract from Pope:—

To the loud call each distant rock replies;
Tossed by the storm the towering surges rise;

While the hoarse ocean beats the sounding shore,
Dashed from the strand the flying waters roar,
Flash at the shock, and gathering in a heap,
The liquid mountains rise, and overhang the deep.
But when blue Neptune from his car surveys,
And calms at one regard the raging seas,
Stretched like a peaceful lake the deep subsides,
And the pitched vessel o'er the surface glides.

Pitt's Vida.

This is tame and prosaic, with the exception of the Alexandrine in italics, which is highly expressive and picturesque. I must here quote a couplet from Wordsworth.

And see the children sporting on the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

The second is a magnificent line, and has an immortal air. The sound and the sense are equally impressive. It is even superior to a similar passage in Shelley.

–And hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

While on the subject of the sea, I may as well also refer to Lord Byron, whose oceanic poetry has many fine illustrations of Pope's favorite rule. What a free, wave-like, sweeping harmony pervades the following exquisite stanza :—

Once more upon the waters ! yet once more !
And the waves bound beneath me like a steed
That knows its rider. Welcome to their roar !
Swift be their guidance wheresoe'er it lead !
Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on ; for I am as a weed
Flung from the rock on ocean's foam to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail!

The *harmony* of this splendid Spenserean stanza, (a form of verse which Shelley considered inexpressibly delightful) is quite perfect, and the ideas are in unison with the music. For some portion of its excellence the noble poet was perhaps indebted to James Montgomery, of Sheffield, who had previously written :—

> He only, like the ocean-weed uptorn
> And loose along the world of waters borne,
> Was cast, companionless, from wave to wave.

In Lord Byron's grand and vivid description of a storm amongst the mountains, there is a specimen of imitative harmony.

> Far along
> From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
> Leaps the live thunder!

But let me return to Pope, who after all has given us more specimens of this peculiar beauty than almost any other poet. What an admirable illustration of a lame Alexandrine is the following :—

> A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
> And, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

The hitch in the verse at the word *drags* has an excellent effect and completes the image. But Alexandrines are not always "needless," though in the heroic couplet they can very rarely be introduced without an awkward effect. In winding up the volume of sweet sounds in the Spenserean stanza, their grace and fitness are unquestionable. It is absolutely necessary, however, that the cæsural pause should be after the sixth syllable, or the line halts, and "drags, like a wounded snake." It has always excited my surprise that Shelley, who was deeply learned in the mysteries of versification, should have so frequently transgressed this rule. Byron, Campbell and others have been guilty

of the same error. Even Spenser himself is often at fault in his concluding lines.

The following lines from the Essay on Criticism illustrate the rules they would enforce :—

> These equal syllables alone require,
> Though oft *the ear the open* vowels tire ;
> While expletives their feeble aid *do* join,
> And—ten—low—words—oft—creep—in—one—dull—line*.

In the next couplet, I think Dryden's name should stand in the place of Denham's. The first line has the "easy vigour" of which it speaks.

> And praise the easy vigour of a line
> Where Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join.

The anecdote given by Leigh Hunt of Moore's repeating with great *gusto,* the following lines by Dryden, remarkable for their "easy vigour," pleasantly occurs to me at this moment :—

> Let honour and preferment go for gold,
> But glorious beauty isn't to be sold.

A comparison of a couplet of Dryden's with two of Doctor Johnson's, places the unaffected force and freedom of the former in a striking light.

> Let *observation* with *extensive view*
> *Survey mankind from China to Peru,*
> Remark each *anxious toil,* each *eager strife,*
> And watch the *busy scenes* of *crowded life ;*
> Then say, &c.

Listen to Glorious John Dryden, and compare his directness with the pompous pleonasms of the author of the Rambler.

> Look round the habitable world, how few
> Know their own good, or knowing it, pursue.

* There are, however, many very fine monosyllabic lines in English Poetry.

Hazlitt, I think, mentions that it was Wordsworth who first drew attention to these parallel passages.

The modulation of the following lines from Dryden's "Theodore and Honoria" is in admirable keeping with the subject. The pauses are very happily arranged.

While listening to the murmuring leaves he stood
More than a mile immersed within the wood;
At once the wind was laid; the whispering sound
Was dumb; a rising earthquake rocked the ground;
With deeper brown the grove was overspread,
A sudden horror seized his giddy head,
And his ears tingled and his colour fled.

Here is another passage of a similar character from the same poet.

The fanning wind upon her bosom blows;
To meet the fanning wind her bosom rose;
The fanning wind and purling stream continue her repose.

In Dryden's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day (Alexander's Feast) there are numerous adaptations of sound to sense. The repetition of the word *fallen* in the following lines has a remarkably fine effect.

He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen, from his high estate
And weltering in his blood.

There is a similar beauty in the ensuing.

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again;
At length with love and wine at once oppressed
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

The variation of the time in the following passage is extremely happy.

Now strike the golden lyre again:
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain;
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder!
Hark, hark, the horrid sound
Has raised up his head,
As awaked from his dead,
And amazed he stares around!

Dryden seems to have particularly enjoyed the effect of representative harmony. The following verse from a song in his *King Arthur* has a very martial sound.

Come, if you dare, our trumpets sound;
Come, if you dare, the foes rebound;
We come, we come, we come, we come,
Says the double, double, double, beat of the thundering drum.

This, however, is a repetition of some lines in the first of the author's two Odes for St. Cecilia's Day.

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double, double, double beat of the thundering drum
Cries hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.

These noisy lines are perhaps not in the best taste, and remind me of Pope's description of Sir Richard Blackmore:

What! like Sir Richard, rumbling rough and fierce,
With arms and George and Brunswick crowd the verse,
Rend with tremendous sound your ears asunder
With gun, drum, trumpet, blunderbuss and thunder!

In Bonnell Thornton's burlesque Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, there is the following amusing specimen of imitative harmony.

In strains more exalted the salt-box shall join,
And clattering and battering and clapping combine:
With a rap and a tap, while the hollow side sounds,
Up and down leaps the flap, and with rattling rebounds.

Though Pope's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day is generally admitted to be a failure, and to be in almost every respect greatly inferior to Dryden's Alexander's Feast, it is not utterly devoid of merit. Dr. Johnson highly commends the third stanza, in which he says "there are numbers, images, harmony and vigour, not unworthy the antagonist of Dryden." Dr. Aiken remarks of the first stanza (which I shall here quote), that it "seems to imitate happily the music it describes:"—

Descend ye Nine; descend and sing;
The breathing instruments inspire;
Wake into voice each silent string,
And sweep the sounding lyre!
In a sadly pleasing strain
Let the warbling lute complain;
Let the loud trumpet sound
Till the roofs all around
The shrill echoes rebound;
While in more lengthened notes and slow,
The deep, majestic, solemn organs blow.
Hark! the numbers soft and clear
Gently steal upon the ear;
Now louder, and yet louder rise,
And fill with spreading sounds the skies;
Exulting in triumph now swell the bold notes,
In broken air trembling, the wild music floats,
Till by degrees, remote and small,
The strains decay,
And melt away
In a dying, dying fall.

But though Dr. Johnson bestows a general approval on this poem (the least successful of all Pope's works), and though he

honours some passages with particular praise, this first stanza, he says, consists of "sounds well chosen indeed, but only sounds." I have already admitted the danger of a too minute attention to the art of representative metre, as it may lead the poet to overlook far more important considerations, and to sacrifice sense to sound. A similar danger, however, is common to all other arts. The painter as well as the poet may make too much of his accessories, and too little of his main subject. This is no reason, however, why the painter's accessories or the poet's metrical details should be treated with indifference or contempt. The music of verse seems to have a natural affinity to what may be called the music of thought, and no reader of nice ear or poetical sensibility can fail to appreciate its worth. "Harmony of period and melody of style," says Shenstone, "have greater weight than is generally imagined in the judgment we pass upon writing and writers. As a proof of this, let us reflect, what texts of Scripture, what lines in poetry, or what periods we most remember and quote, either in verse or prose, and we shall find them to be only musical ones." Beautiful thoughts and exquisite emotions "involuntarily move harmonious numbers."

One of Pope's best attempts at imitative harmony is his description of the labour of Sisyphus.

> With many a weary step and many a groan,
> *Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone;*
> The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
> *Thunders impetuous down and smokes along the ground.*

To every reader, who has gentility enough to aspirate the *h's*, the second line is quite a task. He has given us another line that moves with the same difficulty.

> "And when up ten steep slopes you've dragged your thighs."

Here indeed

> The line too labours, and the words move slow.

Mr. Crowe, the author of Lewisdon Hill, has attempted a new version of this celebrated passage respecting Sisyphus, and it is not without great merit, though unequal perhaps to that of Pope.

Then Sisyphus I saw, with ceaseless pain
Labouring beneath a ponderous stone in vain.
With hands and feet striving, with all his might
He pushed the unwieldy mass up a steep height;
But ere he could achieve his toilsome course,
Just as he reached the top, a sudden force
Turned the curst stone, and slipping from his hold
Down again, down the steep rebounding, down it rolled.

Paradise Lost abounds in examples of the beauty of which I am now treating. The toil of Satan perhaps even surpasses that of Sysiphus,

So he with difficulty and labour hard
Moved on: with difficulty and labour he—

Now for the "*harsh thunder*" of the gates of Hell! With what rapidity they fly open!

On a sudden open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound
The infernal doors; and on their hinges grate.
Harsh thunder.

Here is a happy imitation of an echo.

I fled and cried out, *death!*
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
From all her caves, and back resounded *death!*

The pause after the word *shook* in the next extract is very effective.

And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike.

The quick and joyous movement of the ensuing verses is a particularly happy instance of representative harmony.

Let the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound,
To many a youth, and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequered shade.

There is a *watery* music in the following lines.

Fountains! and ye that warble as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.

Here is a description of carriage wheels descending and ascending a hill. It is noticed by Mr. Crowe, but I know not who the author is.

Which in their different courses as they pass
Rush violently down precipitate,
Or slowly turn, oft resting, up the steep.

Dyer in his "Ruins of Rome," a poem that Wordsworth remarks has been very undeservedly neglected, has a fine specimen of imitative harmony, in which the fall of ruins is represented with great effect. The passage is quoted by Johnson with commendation.

The pilgrim oft
At dead of night, 'mid his orison, hears
Aghast the voice of time; disparting towers
Tumbling all precipitate down dashed,
Rattling around, loud thundering to the moon.

The same poet well describes the sudden delay in a ship's progress on the Indian Ocean by a cessation of wind.

With easy course
The vessels glide; unless their speed be stopped
By dead calms, that oft lie on those smooth seas.

The following remarkably successful adaptation of sound to sense is from Pope's Homer's Iliad. It has a greater freedom of versification than the translator usually exhibits.

As from some mountain's craggy forehead torn
A rock's huge fragment flies, with fury borne,

(Which from the stubborn stone a torrent rends)
Precipitate the ponderous mass descends;
From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds,
At every shock the crackling wood resounds;
Still gathering strength, it smokes; and urged amain,
Whirls, leaps, and thunders down, impetuous to the plain;
There stops,——&c.

The ensuing lines from Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida" seem inflated with the bulky meaning.

"The large Achilles, on his press'd bed lolling,
From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause."

Cowley laboured hard to produce an echo to the sense, and sometimes succeeded, as the next four lines may show. The continuity of a stream is well represented.

He who defers his work from day to day,
Does on a river's brink expecting stay,
Till the whole stream that stopped him shall be gone,
Which runs, and as it runs, for ever will run on.

The progress of Milton's fiend is a very striking illustration of the effect to be gained by an artful and choice arrangement of words.

"The fiend
O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings or feet pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps or flies."

I need hardly give any further specimens*, for every reader, though he may not previously have studied the subject, must now understand the nature of imitative harmony in verse. It depends, it will be seen, sometimes on the sound of particular words, sometimes on the management of the pauses, sometimes on the length or shortness of the metrical feet, and sometimes on all these circumstances artfully or happily combined.

* A few of these examples have been noticed before by Johnson, Beattie and Crowe; but I have introduced as many new ones as I could recollect.

A SOLDIER'S DREAM.

> The foulest stain and scandal of our nature
> Became a boast;—*one* murder made a Villain,
> *Millions* a Hero!
>
> *Porteus.*

The foe had fled—the fearful strife had ceased—
And shouts arose of mockery and joy,
As the loud trumpet's wild exulting voice
Proclaimed the victory! With weary tread,
But spirits light and free, the victors passed
On to the neighbouring citadel. Nor deemed,
Nor recked they, in that moment's pride, of aught
But glory won. Or if a tender thought
Recalled the fallen brave, 'twas like the cloud
On Summer's radiant brow—a flitting shade.

Yet on the battle-plain how many lay,
In their last dreamless sleep! Some too were there
Who struggled yet within the mighty grasp
Of that stern conqueror—Death. The fearful throes
Of parting life, at intervals, would wring,
E'en from the proudest heart, the piercing cry
Of mortal agony.

In pain I sunk,
Worn and disabled, 'mid the dead and dying.
Night's shadows were around,—the sickly moon,
Dim and discoloured, rose, as if she mourned
To gaze upon a scene so fraught with woe!

And there was one who passed me at this hour,
A form familiar to my memory
From long-departed years. For we had met
In early youth, with feelings unconcealed,
And passions unrepressed. E'en then he seemed
The bane of every joy. His brow grew dark
At boyhood's happy voice and guileless smile,
As though they mocked him! Now he sternly marked
My well-remembered face, yet lingered not.
There was a taunt upon his haughty lip,
A fiery language in his scowling eye,
My proud heart ill could brook!

E'en like a vision of the fevered brain,
His image haunted me—and urged to madness.—
And when my wearied limbs were locked in sleep,
The blood-red sod, my couch—the tempest-cloud,
My canopy—my bed-fellows, the dead—
My lullaby, the moaning midnight wind—
I had a dream—a strange bewildered dream—
And *he* was with me!

Methought I heard the hollow voice of Death
Tell of another world, while awful shrieks
Of wild despair, and agony, and dread,
Shook the dark vault of heaven!—Suddenly
Deep silence came,—and all the scene was changed!
Insufferable radiance glared around,
And pained the dazzled eye. In robes of light
High on a gorgeous throne, appeared a Form
Of pure celestial glory! In deep awe
A silent, vast, innumerable throng
Of earth-freed warriors bowed. The Form sublime,

In these benign and memorable words,
The purer spirits hailed—"Ye who have owned
Religion for your Leader, and have loved
The family of Man, and toiled and bled
For Liberty and Justice! Ye have fought
A glorious fight, and gained a glorious meed—
A bright inheritance of endless joy,
A home of endless rest!"

At this, flashed forth
With lineaments divinely beautiful,
Fair shapes of bright-wing'd beings, holy guides
To realms of everlasting peace and love!

Alas! how few of that surrounding host
Were led to happier worlds! The chosen band
In sacred light departed; and the form
That sat upon the throne, then slowly rose
With darkened brow, and majesty severe,
And this dread judgment gave—
"He that can love not Man loves not his God!
And lo! his image ye have dared to mar
In hate and exultation, and for this
Shall fearful strife, and agonies untold,
Be your eternal doom!"

And now with horrid laughter mixed with yells
More terrible than shuddering Fancy hears
Raising strange echoes in the charnel vault,
Uprose grim Fiends of Hell, and urged us on,
Through paths of hideous gloom, till like the sea
At night, wide shown beneath the lightning's glare,
A boundless plain quick burst upon the view!

In the dim distance glittered shafts of war;—
Wild Horror's cry, and Hate's delirious shout,
The din of strife, and shrieks of agony,
Came on the roaring blast! A mighty voice,
Piercing the dissonance infernal, cried,
"*On to the Hell of Battle!*" These dread words,
Like sudden thunder, startled and dismayed
Each quailing warrior's soul. But soon despair
Was wrought to frenzy, and we madly rushed,
To join the strife of demons!

One alone
Amid that countless throng now caught mine eye!
His was the form I loved not in my youth,
And cursed in after years. We fiercely met,—
A wild thrust reached him. Then he loudly shrieked,
And Death's relieving hand besought in vain,
Where Death could never come! With quenchless rage,
And strength untamed, on his triumphant foe,
Again he turned!—but *he* was victor now;—
And in unutterable pain—I woke!

'Twas morning—and the sun's far-levelled rays
Gleamed on the ghastly brows and stiffened limbs
Of those that slumbered—ne'er to wake again!

THE NEW YEAR AND THE OLD.

[WRITTEN ON THE 31ST OF DECEMBER, 1833.]

The Old Year and the New Year are now quickly meeting, and will separate in less than the shake of a skylark's wing, or the single glimmer of a star!

"We take no note of time but by its loss," and are not easily reminded of the purport and rapidity of our voyage down the stream of life. If it were not for the land-marks and divisions which are visible in our course, we should glide onwards to the vast waters of eternity with a perfect unconsciousness of our progress. It is well, therefore, to preserve, as far as possible, those ancient customs which celebrate the advent of particular seasons, and render them memorable and distinct. The vigil on the last night of the old year to welcome the arrival of the new one is, abstractedly considered, a beautiful and affecting practice, though it is unhappily too often attended with inebriation and vulgar merriment. Nothing can be less appropriate to the season than jollity and uproar. If there be any one period that seems more essentially suited to sober thought than another, it is this. There is something ungracious in the manner in which we mix our merry welcome of the new year with our farewell to the past year, which is like an old familiar face, fraught with many tender associations.

Though, like other men, I have sometimes looked towards the future with eagerness and curiosity, I am far more disposed to linger over the memory of departed hours. I feel no peculiar satisfaction in parting with an ancient friend, nor can I hail his successor without some feeling of distrust. But the generality of

mankind are naturally gamblers, and are ever ready to risk their accustomed pleasures for the chance of new ones. Those who have once lost their hearts to Fortune can never be persuaded that she will continue indifferent to their claims, however scornfully she may treat them for a while. The advice of the wise, and their own sad experience are equally unprofitable to those who are blinded by ambition and self-will. Men of ardent temperaments, and of an active life which leaves little time for thought, have generally a very slight regard for the past, and launch all their happiness on the deceitful future. They fancy themselves more shrewd and practical than the philosopher, who, because he occasionally retraces his path in the soft twilight of imagination, is considered a visionary idler. They know not the stuff of which life is made, and are themselves in a wild delusion. What is the future, for which they wear out their hearts and minds with such incessant toil?—a nonentity—the dream of a dream. The past, on the other hand, is a storehouse of treasures that are lodged beyond the reach of fate. While we have life and memory they are ours. We could not have them longer. This is equivalent to an eternity of enjoyment, for it ends but with our consciousness of good and evil. The future is rife with disappointment. The present glides by us while we breathe its name. We may as well endeavour to grasp water in the hand, as to retain such a small and slippery division of human life. It is, indeed, an inexpressibly insignificant portion of existence, and is chiefly valuable as we make it worthy to live in our recollection after its departure. As the past then forms so large a share of our being, it is strange that men should bring themselves to regard it with indifference, and to waste all their thoughts upon things and seasons yet unborn. As we cannot take a last look at the meanest material object around which is breathed an atmosphere of old associations, it seems almost inexplicable that we should be so ready to insult the departing year with the loud peals of joyance. Our ancient friend

is laden with a weight of many cares and pleasures; but because the stores are familiar and the bearer is old, ought both to be despised? If a strange face and untried goods are at our door, and the old guest must necessarily resign his place to the new one, this merriment at parting with the former is at least ill-timed. As he glides away from the scene into the shades of night, with what a child-like eagerness do men clamorously welcome his successor, who comes like a plausible pedlar from a foreign land. They gaze greedily on his glittering wares, and grasp at the brittle bubbles of hope, the gilded dross of avarice, and the drums and rattles of ambition.

I know nothing of the future. I look upon the past as a well-tried friend that has departed for an eternal exile. Its evil qualities are written on water, its good on adamant. I lament that it is gone, and grieve that I did not better appreciate its worth before. I see it now through an altered medium, unblinded by fear or hope or passion. I cannot scan the advancing year with the same facility and precision. The future is like the mist that hangs about the dawn of day. Coming objects loom largely in the shade, but dwindle as the light increases. The past is like an evening landscape bathed in the lingering glory of a departed sun. Our retrospections are generally of a nature far more pure and holy than our hopes and our desires. The evil-minded do not dwell fondly upon the past. Men love to recall the memory of their best actions, and not their worst. The stern and heartless rush recklessly forward,

"And cast no longing, lingering, look behind."

The gaiety of ingenuous childhood—the first smile of innocent love—the cordiality and disinterestedness of youthful friendship—our earliest impressions of the beauty of human life and the loveliness of external nature—the whispered prayers at a mother's knee ere the consciousness of sin made us dread our great Crea-

tor—these are amongst the many recollections that hallow and endear the past, and which would be ill exchanged for the vague and uncertain visions of the future.

Even if the past has been to some a season of affliction, who can say that the new year will be less unhappy? We know the worst of the one—we know literally nothing of the other. The dreariest path has ever some few verdant spots that may be looked back upon with a feeling of interest, and even remembered sorrows do not irritate us like those which are anticipated, but on the contrary often assume an aspect that is strangely pleasing. Their bitterness has passed away. If Hope never deviates from her onward path, nor mingles in the train of departing seasons, Memory is a safer and sweeter though less brilliant companion, and her footsteps are unfollowed by the fiend Despair. I have already adverted to the pure and virtuous and refined emotions which are awakened by the contemplation of the past. Let those who doubt the truth of this reflect, how much more ready they are to forgive old injuries or vexations than such as are experienced in the present or anticipated in the future. We recollect ancient quarrels with self-accusation and a generous allowance. Former rivalries and contests now seem to have been unnecessarily fierce and virulent. A change has come over us, and our hearts are softened. We cannot dwell, therefore, too much upon the past. It is a gentle teacher of virtue, wisdom and benevolence. We listen to its solemn voice with a mysterious reverence and a severe delight. The most trivial relics of our earlier life are treasured things. They gleam out from the dusky shadows of departed years like gems seen by moonlight. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy."

Our first pure pleasures are yet in Memory's holy keeping. However rough and dreary may be our onward pilgrimage, she, like a heavenly spirit, still haunts and cheers us with her magic mirror.

It were a pitiful philosophy that would deprive us of such enchantments as these, and make us look upon the varied and delightful volume of the past as a dead letter. Thoughts are things, and form as essential a part of our actual existence, as our flesh and blood.

We should reckon not our life by years and days, but by what we do and think. In this way a short life might be made a long one, by the quantity of ideas and deeds that would be crowded into its narrow span. Such is the life of angels, and the only one that is worthy of intellectual beings. Spirits have no marks of time. The idler and the slumberer only exist at intervals, for vacuity and sleep are a partial death.

The noon of night is fast approaching. Now for the farewell toll to the departing year, and the shouts of welcome to the stranger! But hark!—the clock has struck! The mystic change is over. The new year has come—the old one has departed. As at the death and succession of mighty monarchs, we mingle sighs and gratulations, and merriment and mourning. It is a sample of the varieties and incongruities of human life. We resemble those hasty and fickle lovers who receive a new partner ere the predecessor is cold and buried. The gay bridal chariot dashes against the slow solemn hearse. The funeral baked meats furnish forth the marriage table. But let others run riot as they may at the fresh arrival, and worship the rising sun, my own heart still yearns towards the vanished year. I have learnt its worst qualities and its best, and the first are softened and the last increased by the tender hand of Time. Before me all is darkness. I see not

> "Through what variety of untried being,
> Through what new scenes and dangers I must pass."

With reference to the future I can be certain but of one solemn fact, that the new year brings me nearer to that awful

period, when even the past, which now lives so vividly in remembrance, will be utterly annihilated, and

> "This sensible warm motion will become
> A kneaded clod."

I turn from this chilling prospect with stifled breath, and think of "the blind cave of eternal night" with a dread revulsion;—for I love the blue skies, the green fields and the crystal air. I would still listen to the sound of merry voices, and meet the radiant faces of the young and gay. I would study and commune with living wisdom, and trace the wondrous intellectual advances of mankind. Oh! it is terrible to receive a mandate to depart

> "From the warm precincts of the cheerful day,"

ere youth and hope have left us. To quit the glittering and crowded theatre of life, for the dark, solitary and silent cell of death. To be forced from the scene at a fate-fraught period like the present, when such mighty moral revolutions are at work, is like being dragged from the spectacle of an unfinished drama at the moment when we are most interested in its progress. But, alas! the fairest and the proudest of human beings must bow submissively to the stern voice of Asrael, come when he may, and lie in "cold obstruction," while many a loathsome reptile is basking in the pleasant sun! Our dearest friends and kindred, our own cherished offspring, will at last walk over the cold, damp sod which presses upon our breasts, with as much gaiety and thoughtlessness as if we had never been.

It is a law of our nature that the image of death is ever thrust from our minds by the strong antagonist principle of vitality, and while our veins are supplied with pure and healthy blood the visions of the charnel house are faint and powerless. They may laugh at death who do not vividly apprehend its nature. The

healthy and the happy cannot see it. There are too many bright objects between them and the grave. What we take for courage is often mere obtuseness of mind or strength of nerve. A fit of sickness or meditation works a wondrous change. Perhaps no human being ever looked death in the face without a shudder. The hero who marches up to the cannon's mouth, beholds not the King of Terrors on his path. Through the din and smoke of the mortal strife, he is drawn onward by the glittering eye of Fame, that wins him to destruction, as the deadly serpent is said to fascinate its prey. He that would die boldly and proudly in the presence of assembled thousands would shrink aghast from an unseen struggle with the last dread enemy of man. A desire for death, or even an indifference to life, is a moral disease, and is not consistent with our nature, in which the principle of self-preservation is so deeply planted. The fear of the grave may indeed be easily evaded, but never entirely overcome. The thirst of glory, and the consolations of religion do not make us friendly with death on its own account; but render us proof against its terrors by filling our minds with more congenial images, and by presenting us with glimpses of a paradise beyond the gloomy gratings of the tomb. And yet if we philosophically contemplate the relations of life and death, our horror of annihilation seems utterly unreasonable. It is as natural to die as it is to live. In fact, life itself is "a daily death." As far as yesterday is concerned, we are already dead. Literally speaking, we exist but in the present. In a few brief years both mind and body undergo as complete a revolution as the change from animal to vegetable existence. We are at last no more the same beings, than echoes are original sounds. We bear but a faint resemblance to our former selves. Had we dropped into the grave in our dawn of life, our childhood would not have been more unequivocally dead than it now is. Our youth must also die, and next our manhood, and when old age, says Montaigne, is carried to the tomb, it is but an addition-

al death. "Why," he continues, "should we so dread the last? Our death is a part of the life of the universe" which exists by incessant change. Nothing is stationary, and change is a partial annihilation. We do but make room for other existences. Our bodies either turn into masses of animal life, or give vitality to green herbs and flowers. We look upon the death of our childhood without fear and trembling. We do not lament that we were dead a century ago, and why should we grieve because a century hence we shall be in the same condition. We are shocked that the heavens should shine as brightly and men live as joyously after our decease, as during our brief sojourn upon earth. But it was the same before our birth. No sign or change in nature heralded our advent. Of how little importance is the greatest individual to the world, and yet of how much importance is the humblest to himself!

It seems one of the many strange anomalies of the human mind, that it should be so eager to anticipate the future, and yet shrink back with such repugnance from that consummation to which our progress so inevitably leads. We hurry forward as if the end of life were all that we could desire. The vast number and the sociality of our fellow travellers make us forget the goal of our pilgrimage. If any single individual were to feel that he alone in the countless crowd were doomed to certain death, at a fixed period, however remote, he would look forward with a feeling too horrible for words to paint. The uncertainty of each man's allotted time, and the community of our fate, make us less thoughtful and more contented. Though it is not precisely as the poet has observed, that

"All men think all men mortal but themselves,"

yet each individual believes in his own good fortune, and trusts to enjoy a longer lease of life than most of his associates. He always flatters himself that he shall be the last called to the dread

account. He has so often escaped before, that he quells every fresh alarm with the hope of similar success. The idea of death, as I have already explained, is received with so much difficulty by those who are conscious of the strong impregnation of life through their whole system, that the most trivial objects may call off their attention from the subject. Such is the power of a happy imagination and a healthy frame.

Were we embarked on a voyage to a hostile foreign shore, and knew ourselves condemned to be stripped, tortured, and hung by savage hands, we should think the longest passage too short, and curse the swiftness of our vessel. A few pleasant islands in our course would not drive away the anticipation of the last port. But as we travel towards the narrow house to lie down in darkness and corruption, we are impatient of a moment's delay, and the great object in life seems to be to shorten its duration. It is a happy thing, however, that the mind is thus strangely constituted, and that we are able to close our eyes against unpleasing prospects, and turn away our thoughts from the end of all things.

There is no period of the life of man so interesting as its close. A birth occasions less excitement than a death. A new-born human being is rarely an object of particular interest to any portion of mankind, except to those who have introduced him to the world; but the lowliest spirit that ever wore human clay is dignified in the eyes of all men at the final hour. Even the poor fleshly frame which once perhaps afforded food for merriment, or a mark for scorn's poisoned arrows, is then regarded with a profound and mysterious reverence. We enter the death-chamber of the rudest peasant with a slow and solemn step, as if we trod upon holy ground. A too abrupt or a too easy manner would seem a sacrilege. We stand near his simple coffin in religious silence, or speak in whispers, as if fearful of disturbing his awful slumber. All ordinary and familiar sounds are like a mockery of the eternal sleeper. His cold clay is hallowed. The mightiest

of earthly potentates would approach him with respect. As he lies in his silent state there is a strange power in his fixed and pallid lineaments. He is the representative of the majesty of death.

The golden portals of palaces fly open at the approach of the King of Terrors, as freely as the shepherd's wicker gate. Neither massy battlements, nor valorous guards, nor the power of the state, nor the prayers of the priesthood, nor the ingenuity of art, nor the magic of beauty, nor the might of genius, nor the holiness of virtue, can protect the domestic hearth from that general and relentless foe. His silent footstep giveth no warning. We know not when he may steal upon us. This uncertainty is an additional horror. We know when the trees are to wither and the flowers are to fade. We prepare for the approach of winter. But death has no stated season. He comes in youth and in age, in sickness and in health. He casts no shade before him. This mighty and mysterious visitor from an unknown world is more terrible than the simoom of the desert. He blasts the greenest landscape of life at a single breath. Like a dread magician, he enters invisibly our most secret haunts, and strikes us to the ground with his unseen wand.

When the sense of our mortality comes heavily upon the heart, what a pitiful delusion is human life! We look around us in this busy scene, and echo the exclamation of the preacher that "all is vanity!" At such a moment a film is removed from our mental vision, "a change comes over the spirit of our dream," and that which lately seemed serious and important, we discover to be vain and idle; while all that once charmed or amused us becomes a mournful mockery. We gaze with pity and with wonder upon those who are still labouring under the same delusion from which we ourselves have awaked; their laughter seems hysterical, and their merriment hollow. The feeling in some degree resembles, though it greatly exceeds it in intensity, the effect of closing

the ears to the music of a ball room and watching the movements of the dancers. It is recorded of an impassioned Italian poet that he could never look upon such a scene, even with its musical accompaniments, without laughing and shuddering at the same moment. With a similarly blended sentiment of the ludicrous and the sad do we gaze upon Life's giddy whirl, when the golden mist of enchantment evaporates from the scene.

But to return to the consideration of my more immediate subject;—let me not conclude without hailing the New Year, with a somewhat kinder greeting than it has yet received. I may not look upon it with the same affection as the old one, but it is not wholly unattractive. The thirst for novelty makes every New Year a welcome visitor to most men. It suggests fresh plans and inspires fresh hopes. Life and the world seem adapted to our impatience of stillness and monotony. The ever-flitting forms and hues of external nature, the endless variety of human faces and human character, and the phantasmagorial progression of events, are all ministrant to our taste for change. If I cannot on the whole be so enthusiastic in my welcome to the present year as in my farewell to the past one, let it be remembered that should I live another season its aspect and character will be changed, and like its predecessor, it will be hailed at parting with a thoughtful sigh.

SOUNDS AT SEA.

The weary sea is tranquil, and the breeze
Hath sunk to sleep on its slow-heaving breast.
All sounds have passed away, save such as please
The ear of Night, who loves that music best
The din of day would drown.—The wanderer's song,
To whose sweet notes the mingled charms belong
Of sadness linked to joy,—the breakers small
(Like pebbled rills) that round the vessel's bow
A dream-like murmur make,—the splash and fall
Of waters crisp, as rolling calm and slow,
She laves alternately her shining sides,—
The flap of sails that like white garments vast
So idly hang on each gigantic mast,—
The regular tread of him whose skill presides
O'er the night-watch, and whose brief fitful word
The ready helmsman echoes: these low sounds
Are all that break the stillness that surrounds
Our lonely dwelling on the dusky main.
But yet the visionary soul is stirred,
While fancy hears full many a far-off strain
Float o'er the conscious sea!—The scene and hour
Control the spirit with mysterious power;
And wild unutterable thoughts arise,
That make us yearn to pierce the starry skies!

STANZAS TO MY CHILD.

I.

I GAZE on thy sweet face,
My lightly laughing boy!
And charms no painter's hand could trace
Behold in pride and joy,
While pleasure almost turns to pain,
(For human hearts may scarce sustain
Such bliss without alloy,)
Till tears too sweet for those who grieve
Gush forth to chasten and relieve!

II.

And e'en when sorrow's hour
Brings gloom upon my soul,
And shades o'er Life's dull landscape lour
Like clouds that slowly roll
Round solemn Twilight's dusky car,
Thine image kindles as a star,
To cheer me and console,
And dreary thoughts and mournful dreams
Soon pass like mist 'neath morning beams.

III.

For in that bright blue eye
Still glow the rays of bliss,
Like lustre from an azure sky,
Or realms more fair than this.
Though vexed with worldly cares I roam,
They shall not darken this dear home,
Nor check the rapturous kiss
That greets thy fresh and rosy charms
When clasped within mine eager arms!

IV.

This heart indeed were cold
To feeling's gentle sway,
If while thy fairy form I fold,
And those small fingers play
Around my neck, thy face the while
Upraised to catch the wonted smile,
Mine eye could turn away,
Or that calm sullen language wear
That tells of sadness or despair.

I have not darkly roved
O'er Nature's fair domain,
Nor gazed on sun-lit scenes unmoved
In hours of mental pain,
And far less could my soul disown
The light round sinless children thrown
That ne'er can shine again
When years bring guilt, and life no more
Is bright and joyous as before.

VI.

I see my own first hours,
While lingering over thine ;
I see thee pluck the fresh spring-flowers,
An artless wreath to twine ;
The same bright hues their beauty yields
As those I sought in dewy fields,
When kindred bliss was mine ;
And while by memory thus beguiled,
I almost deem myself a child.

VII.

How oft the phantom Care
Hath swiftly passed away,
As some night-bird that may not dare
The morning holy ray,
While half unconsciously mine eye
Hath drank thy charms, till suddenly
I felt the fond smile play
Around my lips, nor could refrain,
But kissed thee o'er and o'er again!

I've watched thy little wiles,
A thousand times and more,
And yet they win my ready smiles
As freely as before;
Thy dear, familiar, prattled words
Are sweeter than the songs of birds
On some calm sun-lit shore;—
Each *new* grace brings as proud surprize
As lights a star-discoverer's eyes.

E'en "thrice-told tales" are sweet
That cheerful children tell,
On sounds their lovely lips repeat
The ear for aye could dwell;
Unlike all other things of earth
Their winning ways and sinless mirth
Still hold us as a spell;
In every mood, in every hour
They bear the same enchanting power.

Ah ! dearest child, if thou
A child couldst thus remain,
And I for ever gaze as now
On one without a stain
Of earthly guilt or earthly care,
With heart as pure and form as fair
As sainted spirits gain,
Methinks e'en this drear world might seem
A heaven as sweet as man could dream !

But mortal flowerets grow
'Till all their bright tints fade,
And thy maturer bloom must know
The bleak world's tempest-shade ;—
Thine eyes a father's fall shall trace,
His form shall sink before thy face,
And when thine heart hath paid
Its tribute brief of natural tears,
Thou'lt seek awhile what soothes and cheers.

XII.

As I now gaze on thee
E'en thou perchance shall gaze
On one whose smiles of guiltless glee
The same proud bliss shall raise,
'Till he to sterner manhood grown
Shall see thee to the grave go down,
And while thy frame decays
Beneath the cold, damp, silent sod,
Shall follow in the track thou'st trod.

XIII.

Alas! how this dim scene
Is fraught with change and death!
What countless myriads here have been
To breathe a moment's breath,
Then sink beneath that mortal doom
That makes the wide green earth a tomb,
Its flowers a funeral wreath;
And oh! what countless myriads more
Shall rise and fall ere Time is o'er!

XIV.

One after one we fill
The darkly yawning grave;
On Time's vast ocean never still
Thus wave succeedeth wave,
And all that from the wreck of life,
The change, the tumult and the strife,
The happiest fate may save,
Is but the memory of a dream,
A name, whose glory is a gleam!

XV.

But hence with thoughts like these,
(The present still is ours!)
They come like autumn's blighting breeze
Through Summer's leafy bowers;
Thy glittering eye and sunny brow
Are all my soul shall gaze on now;
And when the future lowers,
I'll think of that celestial clime
Where all things own eternal prime!

XVI.

The transitory gloom
Is floating fast away!
I cannot long behold thy bloom
And dream of dull decay;
And like a sun-burst on the scene
Where April's fitful clouds have been
Is joy's returning ray,
While balm is shed from fancy's wing
Like odours waving spice-boughs fling.

XVII.

Oh, how that fair face glows!
How that small bosom heaves!
Those red lips tremble like the rose
When light airs part the leaves;
A sudden laughter fills thine eye,
And comes as if thou knew'st not why,
As viewless zephyr weaves
The dimples shining waters show—
Like those thy cheeks are wearing now!

XVIII.

Oh! spirit-gladdening sight!
Oh! happiness divine!
To feel a father's sacred right,
To call such cherub mine!
A humble name, and lowly state
Have been, and still may be, my fate,
Yet how can I repine
At want of wealth, or fame, or power,
While blest with this fair human flower!

LORD BYRON'S OPINION OF POPE.

Lord Byron had always a nervous horror of floating with the stream, and was never inclined to express any other opinions than those which he knew to be in direct opposition to the general judgment of mankind, more especially of his own contemporaries. It was this feeling that led him to undervalue Shakespeare and make Pope his idol. In the Pope and Bowles controversy Lord Byron was any thing but triumphant, notwithstanding the flippant dogmatism of his style, which presented a strong contrast to the moderate, candid, and argumentative productions of his opponent, who though a writer vastly inferior to Lord Byron in the general powers of his mind, had certainly the advantage over him in a sober critical disquisition*. This was less owing to a deficiency of taste and judgment on the part of Byron than to a downright want of sincerity. With all his swaggering he must have been perfectly conscious that he was taking up the wrong side of the question, when he spoke of Pope as the greatest poet in the world. Mr. Bowles was strangely misrepresented and misunderstood, in this discussion, though he simply maintained the theory of Warton, that images drawn from nature, human and external, are more poetical *per se* than those drawn from works of art and artificial manners. I have not a copy of Bowles's pamphlet in my possession, and have not read it since the time of its first publication ; but I well recollect the general tenor of its reasoning, and my surprise at the mistakes or wilful misapprehensions of Byron. It may seem

* Some of Bowles's later pamphlets on the same subject were written in a less amiable spirit.

presumptuous to speak in this strain of so great a man. But very dull eyes may discover spots in the sun, and very ordinary persons may be alive to the faults of their superiors. I shall give a specimen or two of his arguments.

"I opposed," says he, "and will ever oppose the robbery of ruins from Athens, to instruct the English in sculpture; but why did I do so? The *ruins* are as poetical in Piccadilly as they were in the Parthenon, but the Parthenon and its rocks are less so without them. Such is the poetry of art."

To suppose these detached fragments of buildings, as poetical in a confined and crowded court in London, as in the place from which they were taken, surrounded by picturesque and classical scenes and associations, is manifestly erroneous. The same line of argument would prove that a boat high and dry in a dock-yard or in a carpenter's warehouse is as poetical an object as the same boat when filled with human beings, tossing on the stormy sea or sleeping by sunset on a glassy lake. Works of art are not poetical *per se*, but as connected with external nature and human passions.

"Mr. Bowles contends, again, that the pyramids of Egypt are poetical, because of 'the association with boundless deserts,' and that a 'pyramid of the same dimensions would not be sublime in Lincoln's Inn Fields;' not *so* poetical certainly; but take away the pyramids, and what is the desert?"

The desert would still be poetical without the pyramids, but not so the pyramids without the desert. Mr. Bowles would readily admit that the taking away the pyramids would *lessen* the poetry of the desert, because the *human associations* suggested by works of art would add greatly to the interest of any scenery, however beautiful and poetical in itself. In the same way the ocean in a storm is a strikingly poetical object, but its poetry is heightened by the associations of danger and suffering connected with the sight of a ship. It is not the appearance of the mere

planks or the mechanical construction of the ship, but the probable emotions and anxieties of those on board, and the uncertainty of their fate, that touches the heart and awakens the imagination.

"To the question whether the description of a game of cards be as poetical, supposing the execution equal, as a description of a walk in a forest? it may be answered, that the materials are certainly not equal; but that the *artist* who has rendered a game of cards poetical, is by far the greater of the two. But all this ordering of poets is purely arbitrary on the part of Mr. Bowles. There may or may not be, in fact, different orders of poetry; but the poet is always ranked according to his execution, and not according to his branch of the art."

Who does not see the fallacy of this? Will any body maintain that the best satire that was ever written is as poetical as the best epic poem, or entitles the author to the same rank in literature. He whose work is the most *poetical* is the best poet, and not he who exhibits the most skill in treating unpoetical subjects. Dryden's *Absolem* and *Achitophel* is as well handled, perhaps, as Milton's *Paradise Lost;* but which production is the most poetical, and which author is the greatest poet? Is the author of the most excellent sonnet equal in rank to the author of the most excellent tragedy? Certainly not. Dryden has said, that "an Heroic Poem, truly such, is undoubtedly the greatest work which the soul of man is capable to perform." Could he have said this of an epigram without exciting a universal laugh*? A poet who executes an inferior subject with uncommon skill is entitled to a place above him who executes a sublime

* Dr. South, however, foolishly asserted that a perfect epigram is as difficult as an Epic poem, and Pope very justly ridiculed him for it in the Dunciad.

How many Martials were in Pulteney lost!
Else sure some bard to our eternal praise
In twice ten thousand rhyming nights and days,
Had reared the work the all that mortal can,
And South beheld *that masterpiece of man.*

one in a mediocre manner; but *when the execution is equal*, the subject decides the superiority. A lofty subject requires a greater grasp of intellect and a more vigorous imagination than a humble one, and therefore the author of the *Paradise Lost* or of the Tragedy of *Macbeth* would always rank above the author of the most poetical description of a game of cards that was ever written, because no human power could render it so eminently poetical as those two immortal productions. The card-game describer might be a *cleverer* man than Milton without a hundredth part of his genius. Lord Byron, however, very strenuously maintains that "the poet who *executes* best is the highest, whatever his department*." And what is still more strange and inconsistent, after asserting that there are no "orders" in poetry, or that if there be, the poet is ranked by his execution not his subject, he elevates Pope above all other writers of verse on the ground of his being the best *ethical* poet, and ethical poetry being of the highest rank†. If Bentham's prose Ethics were put into good verse, they

* A pig by Morland might be as well done as an angel by Raphael, but this would not make the former artist entitled to the same rank amongst painters as the latter.

† When Lord Byron on his death-bed sent for "an old and ugly witch," or after presenting a gold pin to a lady, intreated its return, because it was unlucky to give any thing with a point, a man of an intellect inferior to the poet's might very reasonably smile at his superstition. His poetical creed, if sincere, is indeed unaccountable; but it is more easy to reconcile ourselves to the belief, that he often expressed on poetical, as on many other subjects, not so much his own opinions as those that he thought would most puzzle and surprize. His whole life seemed to be devoted to creating *a sensation*. He even made himself out a monster of iniquity, that he might become an object of wonder and speculation. His hatred of England and the English people, his scorn of mankind in general, his disbelief in virtue, and his contempt for fame, were all the grossest affectation, and had no real existence in his heart, as his conduct showed. He betrayed on several occasions and in many ways an intense desire to attract and retain the attention of the English public—he was singularly affectionate and kind to all who came in contact with him—was always ready and had frequent reason to acknowledge the virtues of his friends or enemies—had many noble traits in his own character—and devoted the greater part of his life to the acquisition of a name! The failure of his tragedies was the cause of excessive chagrin and

would, according to this decision, be finer poetry than the works of Homer, Shakespeare or Milton.

Byron talks continually about Pope's *faultlessness*, forgetting what that elegant writer himself observes—

"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be;"

mortification, and though he always talked with apparent indifference of such of his poems as were certain of success, he could not help defending, with an uneasy and eager fondness, the less fortunate offspring of his brain. His translation of Pulci and his "Hints from Horace," because every body else considered them unworthy of his genius, and treated them with neglect, were always spoken of by him as his best productions. It is curious to observe, that notwithstanding his pretended indifference to criticism, he was evidently very anxious to stand well with the leading critics. There is something not very creditable to his independence, and certainly very inconsistent with the open and vigorous straight-forwardness of his general character, in the almost servile attention which he paid to Gifford, a man who had very little in common with the Noble Bard. To the tail of almost every letter to Murray he appended his respectful compliments to the Editor of the Quarterly, and always submitted his poems with extraordinary deference to that critic's judgment. In opposition to this I might be referred to his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, as a proof of his literary fearlessness: but that was a youthful indiscretion, which he lived to repent. I make these remarks with no intention to depreciate the general manliness of his character, but to show that his anxiety to secure a favorable notice of his productions made him condescend to a humility very foreign to his nature. Not only was Byron anxious to secure the praises of his critics, but he was thrown into an agony, by such errors of the press, as were likely to lay him open to their censure. That he would have *bribed*, with money, "his Grandmother's Review, The British," to praise him, is not very likely; but it is amusing to learn from one of his letters, that so anxious was he, that his muse should not appear in a disadvantageous dress, that when he heard of some one having made an indifferent translation of his Manfred into Italian, he immediately offered him any sum of money that he expected to obtain by his project, if he would throw the translation into the fire, and promise not to meddle with his Lordship's poems for the future. Having ascertained, that the utmost the man could expect for his version, was 200 francs, Lord Byron offered him that sum, if he would desist from publishing. The Italian however held out for more, and could not be brought to terms, until Byron threatened to horsewhip him. He at last took the 200 francs and gave up his manuscript, entering at the same time into a written engagement never to translate any more of the noble Poet's works. I believe this is the first instance on record of a man having been paid *not* to translate a poem. The Italian seems to have been a ludicrous specimen of a mercenary author, and pocketed both the compliment and the cash with equal coolness.

and towards the conclusion of his letter, his Lordship affirms that if any great national or natural convulsion could or should overwhelm Great Britain and sweep it from the kingdoms of the earth, and leave only a *dead language*, an Englishman anxious that the posterity of strangers should know that there had been such a thing as a British Epic and Tragedy, might wish for the preservation of Shakespeare and Milton; but the surviving world would snatch Pope from the wreck, and let the rest sink with the people. Even the name of Byron, will not shelter the absurdity of this observation, or make me hesitate to protest against so preposterous a conclusion. Amongst other strange things in this letter is his Lordship's assertion that "COWPER IS NO POET;" which assertion is soon followed by another, that Cowper's lines addressed to his Nurse, by no means one of his best performances, are "*eminently poetical and pathetic!*"

Pope has no doubt been greatly undervalued by the critics of the present day, though Lord Byron, who was jealous of the Lake School, and at once abused and imitated its productions, ran into the opposite extreme, and endeavored to bring such men as Wordsworth and Southey into ridicule and contempt by invidious comparisons. Pope was a very exquisite and admirable poet, and with considerable hesitation with reference to the rival claims of Dryden, may perhaps be said to be at the very head of the artificial school of poetry. But though he may be allowed to be the first in his peculiar walk, he must rank comparatively low in the higher department of his art. That lofty enthusiasm, that passionate admiration of external nature, and that profound knowledge of the human heart which are so conspicuous in the dramas of the immortal Shakespeare, we should look for in vain amongst the condensed couplets and labored elegancies of Pope. At the same time it is not to be inferred that he has *no* enthusiasm, *no* sense of the charms of nature, nor insight into the human heart; for he possesses all these qualities, in a certain degree: but they

are not equal in depth and intensity to the same qualities in the highest order of poets, nor do they constitute the predominant characteristics of his mind.

Perhaps the sound sense, the fine irony, the tact for personal ridicule or eulogy, and the intimate acquaintance with polite society and artificial habits, for which Pope was so remarkably distinguished, have led the generality of critics to overlook or undervalue the more purely poetical qualities which he certainly possessed, though in a less eminent degree.

It is strange that Lord Byron and the other defenders of Pope, have not brought forward the various proofs which are to be found in his works of his power of description; for Warton, Wordsworth and Bowles have laid great stress on his palpable deficiency in this important qualification of a true poet. His translation of the Moon-light Scene in the Iliad is spoken of by Wordsworth with contempt, though a complimentary allusion is made to the "Windsor Forest." It is worth while quoting his remarks:—

"It is remarkable that, excepting the Nocturnal Reverie of Lady Winchelsea, and a passage or two in the Windsor Forest of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of Paradise Lost and the Seasons does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden had executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated Moon-light Scene in the Iliad. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict their appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines* are vague, bombastic and senseless; those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory†. The

* Melmoth says that Pope's translation of this passage surpasses the original!

† The following is the passage alluded to by Wordsworth. Rymer regarded it with extatic admiration.

"All things are hushed as Nature's self lay dead:
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head:

verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten ; those of Pope still ret in their hold upon public estimation—nay there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many ardent admirers."

Instead of supporting Pope on his strong ground of the "Windsor Forest," Lord Byron with his usual love of opposition confines himself wholly to a consideration of this Moon-light Scene, which he contends is full of truth and beauty. Now what can be more common-place and indistinct than such phrases and epithets as "refulgent lamp of night"—"sacred light"—"the vivid planets roll"—"gild the glowing pole"—"a flood of glory," &c. &c.? They are precisely of that description which one would expect to meet with in the verses of a school-boy, and present no clear picture to the mind. A living writer has done more justice to the same well known passage. I allude to Mr. Elton. Every reader who is at all versed in the elegant literature of the day, is familiar with the merits of that gentleman, whose translations of the poets of Greece and Rome are rarely denied an honorable place in a well selected library. Mere English scholars, unacquainted with the original, have often been heard to acknowledge, that Elton's translations gave them a higher notion of the purity, simplicity and truth of Greek poetry than any other versions in our language. It is now almost universally admitted, that Pope, as a translator, is too ornate, and takes too many liberties with the venerable blind bard of the Iliad and the Odyssey. He has made an odd mixture of ancient simplicity and modern finery. The superiority of Cowper's translation of Homer to that of Pope, would be more apparent, if the poet of Olney had not been so fearful of falling into the errors of his immediate predecessor as to sin in a contrary and less popular extreme. His version is too studiously

The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping flowers beneath the night-dew sweat;
E'en lust and envy sleep; yet love denies
• Rest to my soul and slumber to my eyes."

bare. It cannot be denied that he has sometimes passed the limits of a poetical simplicity, and has fallen into a prosaic meanness. But he is not always so unfortunate, and no reader of true taste would hesitate to prefer his translation of the celebrated Moon-light Scene, to that of Pope. Surely there is something simple, natural, and, in a word, *Homeric*, in the following passage, that it would be in vain to look for in the couplets of his predecessor.

> As when around the clear, bright moon, the stars
> Shine in full splendour, and the winds are hushed;
> The groves, the mountain tops, the headland heights,
> Stand all apparent: not a vapour streaks
> The boundless blue; but ether, opened wide,
> All glitters, and the shepherd's heart is cheered.

This is incomparably better than the stuff in Pope, about "*conscious swains*" "*eyeing the blue vault*," and "*blessing the useful** *light.*" Elton's translations have often much simplicity of Cowper's, and though in the same passage, he is, perhaps, less successful than him, his version has far more nature than Pope's.

> As beautiful the stars shine out in heaven
> Around the splendid moon, no breath of wind
> Ruffling the calm blue ether; cleared from mist
> The beacon hill-tops, crags and forest dells
> Emerge in light; the immeasurable sky
> Breaks from above and opens on the gaze;
> The multitude of stars are seen at once
> Full sparkling, and the shepherd looking up
> Feels gladdened at his heart.

The lines, however, with which Pope follows up this passage are very exquisite:

> The long reflections of the distant fires
> Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires;

* This is quite a Utilitarian epithet!

A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field.
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose umbered arms by fits thick flashes send;
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

While upon this subject, I cannot refrain from further quotations, and as Pope's *descriptive* powers have never yet received that attention which they deserve, I shall lay a few brief specimens before the reader.

See; from the brake the *whirring* pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings;
Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood and *panting beats the ground.*
Ah! what avail his *glossy varying dyes,*
His *purple crest* and *scarlet circled eyes,*
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings and *breast that flames with gold!**

With slaughtering gun th' unwearied fowler roves,
When frosts have whitened all the naked groves;
Where doves in flocks the leafless trees o'ershade,
And lonely woodcocks haunt the watery glade.
He lifts the tube, and levels with his eye:
Straight a *short thunder* breaks the frozen sky:
Oft as in airy rings they skim the heath
The *clamorous lapwings* feel the leaden death;
Oft as the mounting larks their notes prepare,
They fall, *and leave their little lives in air!*

———

Far as creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual mental power ascends:
Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass;

* This description, however, reminds us a little too much of Thomas Paine's celebrated sarcasm—*Mr. Burke pities the plumage, but neglects the dying bird.* Pope rather injudiciously draws off our attention from the bird's sufferings to make us admire its feathers. The fourth line is perfect.

What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam;
Of smell, the *headlong lioness between,*
And hound sagacious on the tainted green;
Of hearing, from the *life that fills the flood,*
To that which warbles through the vernal wood!
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and *lives along the line.*

These passages, (to which could be added many others of equal excellence from the same writer,) are highly picturesque, and ought to make the Lake poets treat the name of Pope with a little more respect. They as extravagantly depreciate his powers as Lord Byron overrated them. As I have quoted Wordsworth's allusion to the *Nocturnal Reverie* of the Countess of Winchelsea, and as that poem is not likely to be familiar to many of my readers, I will introduce a short extract from it.

"When darkened groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear:
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric, awful in repose:
While sunburnt hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling hay-cocks thicken up the vale:
When the loosed horse, now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing through the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace, and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear: &c. &c."

Wordsworth in the following night-scene, taken from one of his sonnets, appears to have had the natural and striking images contained in the last four lines of the passage just extracted, very strongly in his mind.

"Calm is all nature as a resting wheel;
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal."

Hurdis, in his *Favorite Village*, has also a similar description :—

> "The grazing ox
> His dewy supper from the savoury herbs
> *Audibly gathering.*"

Wordsworth abounds in natural images of admirable truth and beauty, which linked as they usually are to lofty and philosophical thoughts, form some of the most delightful poetry in the language. Here is a companion picture to Pope's "*lonely woodcocks.*" It is from one of Wordsworth's juvenile productions.

> "Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
> Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
> *Where the duck dabbles mid the rustling sedge,*
> And feeding pikes start from the water's edge,
> Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
> Wetting, *that drip upon the water still ;*
> And heron, as resounds the trodden shore
> Shoots upward, *darting his long neck before.*"

The *duck dabbling* in the above passage reminds me of a ludicrous but very descriptive line of Southey's in a Sonnet to a Goose :—

> "*Or waddle wide, with flat and flabby feet,*
> Over some Cambrian mountain's *plashy* moor."

SONNET.

SCENE ON THE GANGES.

THE shades of evening veil the lofty spires
Of proud Benares' fanes! A thickening haze
Hangs o'er the stream. The weary boatmen raise
Along the dusky shore their crimson fires,
That tinge the circling groups. Now hope inspires
Yon Hindoo maid, whose heart true passion sways,
To launch on Gunga's flood the glimmering rays
Of Love's frail lamp,—but, lo! the light expires!
Alas! what sudden sorrow fills her breast!
No charm of life remains. Her tears deplore
An absent lover's doom, and never more
Shall hope's sweet vision yield her spirit rest!
The cold wave quenched the flame—an omen dread
The maiden dares not question;—*he is dead!*

SONNET.

LADY! if from my young, but clouded brow,
The light of rapture fade so fitfully—
If the mild lustre of thy sweet blue eye
Awake no lasting joy,—Oh! do not *Thou*,
Like the gay throng, disdain the mourner's woe,
Or deem his bosom cold!—Should the deep sigh
Seem to the voice of bliss unmeet reply—
Oh! bear with one whose darkened path below
The Tempest-fiend hath crossed! The blast of doom
Scatters the ripening bud, the full-blown flower
Of Hope and Joy, nor leaves one living bloom,
Save Love's wild evergreen, that dares its power,
And clings to this lone heart, young Pleasure's tomb,
Like the fond ivy on the ruined tower!

1822.

MORNING.

I.

Behold glad Nature's triumph! Lo, the sun
Hath burst the pall of night, and o'er the earth
Reviving radiance scattered. Sleep hath done
Her death-resembling reign, and thoughts have birth
That thrill the grateful heart with holy mirth:
While fresh as flowers that deck the dewy ground
Gay Fancy's bright-hued images abound,
And mortals feel the glory and the worth
Of that dear boon—*existence*;—all around
Unnumbered charms arise in every sight and sound!

II.

The scene is steeped in beauty—and my soul,
No longer lingering in the gloom of care,
Doth greet Creation's smile. The gray clouds roll
E'en from the mountain peaks and melt in air!
The landscape looks an Eden! Who could wear
The frown of sorrow now? This glorious hour
Reveals the ruling God! The heavens are bare!
Each sunny stream, and blossom-mantled bower
Breathes of pervading love, and proves the Power
That spoke him into life, hath bless'd Man's earthly dower.

EVENING.

I.

Oh! sweet is the hour
When low in the west,
The sun gilds the bower
Where fond lovers rest,
Then gorgeously bright,
Beneath the blue stream,
In garments of light,
Departs like a dream!

II.

Oh! sweet and serene
The spell that beguiles,
When night's gentle queen
More tenderly smiles!
The boldest are coy—
The wildest are grave—
The sad feel a joy
Loud mirth never gave!

III.

The spirits of love,
To hallow the time,
From regions above
Pour music sublime;
Their harmonies cheer
The mystical night,
And steal on the ear
Of dreaming delight!

SONNET—TO NETLEY ABBEY.

Romantic Ruin! who could gaze on thee
Untouched by tender thoughts, and glimmering dreams
Of long-departed years? Lo! nature seems
Accordant with thy silent majesty!
The far blue hills—the bright reposing sea—
The lonely forest—the meandering streams—
The gorgeous summer sun, whose farewell beams
Illume thine ivied halls, and tinge each tree
Whose green arms round thee cling—the balmy air—
The stainless vault above, that cloud or storm
'Tis hard to deem will ever more deform—
The season's countless graces,—all appear
To thy calm beauty ministrant, and form
A scene to peace and meditation dear!

SONNET—SUNSET.

The summer sun had set,—the blue mist sailed
Along the twilight lake,—no sounds arose,
Save such as hallow Nature's sweet repose,
And charm the ear of Peace. Young Zephyr hailed
The trembling Echo,—o'er the lonely grove
The Night's melodious bard, sad Philomel,
A plaintive music breathed,—the soft notes fell
Like the low-whispered vows of timid love!
I paused awhile, entranced, and such sweet dreams
As haunt the pensive soul—intensely fraught
With sacred incommunicable thought,
And silent bliss profound—with fitful gleams,
Caught from the memory of departed years,
Flashed on my mind, and woke luxurious tears.

MEN OF THE WORLD.

Swift had a friend on whose success in life he could not always look with complacency—"Stafford (a merchant)," said he, "is worth a plum, and is now lending the Government £40,000, yet we were educated together at the same school and university."

Budgell in the *Spectator* (No. 353) thus describes these school-fellows;—"One of them was not only thought an impenetrable blockhead at school, but still maintained his reputation at the university, the other was the pride of his master, and the most celebrated person in the college of which he was a member. The man of genius is at present buried in a country parsonage of eightscore pounds a year, while the other with the bare abilities of a common scrivener has got an estate of above an hundred thousand pounds."

Chalmer's Preface to the Rambler.

THERE is a great difference between the power of giving good advice and the ability to act upon it. Theoretical wisdom is, perhaps, rarely associated with practical wisdom; and we often find that men of no talent whatever contrive to pass through life with credit and propriety, under the guidance of a kind of instinct. These are the persons who seem to stumble by mere good luck upon the philosopher's stone. In the commerce of life every thing they touch seems to turn into gold.

We are apt to place the greatest confidence in the advice of the successful and none at all in that of the unprosperous, as if fortune never favoured fools nor neglected the wise. A man may have more intellect than does him good, for it tempts him to meditate and to compare when he should act with rapidity and decision; and by trusting too much to his own sagacity and too little to fortune, he often loses many a golden opportunity, that is like a prize in the lottery to his less brilliant competitors. It is not the men of thought but the men of action who are best fitted to push

their way upwards in the world. The Hamlets or philosophical speculators are out of their element in the crowd. They are wise enough as reflecting observers, but the moment they descend from their solitary elevation and mingle with the thick throng of their fellow-creatures, there is a sad discrepancy between their dignity as teachers and their conduct as actors. Their wisdom in busy life evaporates in words. They talk like sages, but they act like fools. There is an essential difference between those qualities that are necessary for success in the world, and those that are required in the closet. Bacon was the wisest of human beings in his quiet study, but when he entered the wide and noisy theatre of life, he sometimes conducted himself in a way of which he could have admirably pointed out the impropriety in a moral essay. He knew as well as any man that honesty is the best policy, but he did not always act as if he thought so. The fine intellect of Addison could trace with subtlety and truth all the proprieties of social and of public life, but he was himself deplorably inefficient both as a companion and as a statesman. A more delicate and accurate observer of human life than the poet Cowper, is not often met with, though he was absolutely incapable of turning his knowledge and good sense to a practical account, and when he came to act for himself, was as helpless and dependent as a child. The excellent author of the *Wealth of Nations*, could not manage the economy of his own house.

People who have sought the advice of successful men of the world, have often experienced a feeling of surprise and disappointment when listening to their common-place maxims and weak and barren observations. There is very frequently the same discrepancy, though in the opposite extreme, between the words and the actions of prosperous men of the world that I have noticed in the case of unsuccessful men of wisdom. The former talk like fools, but they act like men of sense. The reverse is the case with the latter. The thinkers may safely direct the movements of

other men, but they do not seem peculiarly fitted to direct their own.

They who bask in the sunshine of prosperity, are generally inclined to be so ungrateful to fortune, as to attribute all their success to their own exertions, and to season their pity for their less successful friends with some degree of contempt. In the great majority of cases nothing can be more ridiculous and unjust. In the list of the prosperous, there are very few indeed, who owe their advancement to talent and sagacity alone. The majority must attribute their rise to a combination of industry, prudence and good fortune, and there are many who are still more indebted to the lucky accidents of life than to their own character or conduct.

Perhaps not only the higher intellectual gifts, but even the finer moral emotions are an incumbrance to the fortune-hunter. A gentle disposition and extreme frankness and generosity, have been the ruin, in a worldly sense, of many a noble spirit. There is a degree of cautiousness and mistrust, and a certain insensibility and sternness, that seem essential to the man who has to bustle through the world, and secure his own interests. He cannot turn aside, and indulge in generous sympathies, without neglecting, in some measure, his own affairs. It is like a pedestrian's progress through a crowded street. He cannot pause for a moment, or look to the right or left, without increasing his own obstructions. When time and business press hard upon him, the cry of affliction on the road-side is unheeded and forgotten. He acquires a habit of indifference to all but the one thing needful—his own success.

I shall not here speak of those by-ways to success in life which require only a large share of hypocrisy and meanness; nor of those insinuating manners and frivolous accomplishments which are so often better rewarded than worth or genius; nor of the arts by which a brazen-faced adventurer, sometimes throws a

modest and meritorious rival into the shade. Nor shall I proceed to show how great a drawback is a noble sincerity in the commerce of the world. The memorable scene between Gil Blas and the Archbishop of Toledo, is daily and nightly re-acted on the great stage of life. I cannot enter upon minute particulars, or touch upon all the numerous branches of my subject, without exceeding the limits I have proposed to myself in the present essay.

Perhaps a knowledge of the world, in the ordinary acceptation of the phrase, may mean nothing more than a knowledge of conventionalisms, or a familiarity with the forms and ceremonials of society. This, of course, is of easy acquisition when the mind is once bent upon the task. The practice of the small proprieties of life to a congenial spirit, soon ceases to be a study; it rapidly becomes a mere habit, or an untroubled and unerring instinct. This is always the case when there is no sedentary labour by the midnight lamp to produce an ungainly stoop in the shoulders, and a conscious defect of grace and pliancy in the limbs; and when there is no abstract thought or poetic vision to dissipate the attention, and blind us to the trivial realities that are passing immediately around us. Some degree of vanity and a perfect self-possession are absolutely essential; but high intellect is only an obstruction. Men whose heads are little better than a pin's, have rendered themselves extremely acceptable in well-dressed circles. There are some who seem born for the boudoir and the ball-room, while others are as little fitted for fashionable society, as a fish is for the open air and the dry land. They who are more familiar with books than with men, cannot look calm and pleased when their souls are inwardly perplexed. The almost venial hypocrisy of politeness, is the more criminal and disgusting in their judgment, on account of its difficulty to themselves and the provoking ease with which it appears to be adopted by others. The loquacity of the forward, the effeminate affectation of the foppish, and

the sententiousness of shallow gravity, excite a feeling of contempt and weariness that they have neither the skill nor the inclination to conceal.

A recluse philosopher is unable to return a simple salutation without betraying his awkwardness and uneasiness to the quick eye of a man of the world. He exhibits a ludicrous mixture of humility and pride. He is indignant at the assurance of others, and is mortified at his own timidity. He is vexed that he should suffer those whom he feels to be his inferiors to enjoy a temporary superiority. He is troubled that they should be able to trouble him, and ashamed that they should make him ashamed. Such a man, when he enters into society, brings all his pride, but leaves his vanity behind him. Pride allows our wounds to remain exposed, and makes them doubly irritable; but vanity, as Sancho says of sleep, seems to cover a man all over as with a cloak. A contemplative spirit cannot concentrate its attention on minute and uninteresting ceremonials, and a sense of unfitness for society makes the most ordinary of its duties a painful task. There are some authors who would rather write a quarto volume in praise of woman, than hand a fashionable lady to her chair.

The foolish and formal conversation of polite life is naturally uninteresting to the retired scholar; but it would, perhaps, be less objectionable if he thought he could take a share in it with any degree of credit. He has not the feeling of calm and unmixed contempt; there is envy and irritation in his heart. He cannot despise his fellow-creatures, nor be wholly indifferent to their good opinion. Whatever he may think of their manners and conversation, his uneasiness evinces that he does not feel altogether above or independent of them. No man likes to seem unfit for the company he is in. At Rome every man would be a Roman.

Of the class of proud and sensitive men of thought, the poet Cowper was a striking example, and he has described their feelings with great truth and vivacity :—

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
And bear the marks upon a blushing face
Of needless shame and self-imposed disgrace.
Our sensibilities are so acute
The fear of being silent makes us mute.

* * * * * *

The visit paid, with ecstacy we come
As from a seven years' transportation home,
And there resume an unembarrassed brow,
Recovering what we lost we know not how,
The faculties that seemed reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.

There is in this City of Palaces* more than one example of the unfitness of the literary character for general society. A particular friend of my own, who is fonder of the study than the drawing-room, when he enters a social circle in which there are faces not thoroughly familiar to him, is like a wanderer in a foreign scene. His strange blunders are often exceedingly offensive to the feelings and prejudices of those whom he is most desirous to oblige. He fails in exact proportion to his anxiety for success. If he were walking in his own garden or sitting in his own domestic circle, he could be as self-possessed and common-place a person as any in the world. He might remain for hours in a state of mental ease or inaction, and even "whistle for want of thought;" but the moment that he enters a new scene, and feels a little out of his element, his intellectual faculties commence a rapid chaotic dance. It is in vain that he attempts to control or guide a single thought; the reason has no longer sovereign sway and masterdom. His brain resembles the state of a ship in the last extremity, when the sailors, laughing at all authority, leave everything to fate, and indulge themselves in a mad and melancholy merriment. In this state of temporary delirium, a man can hardly

* Calcutta—where this article was written.

be thought responsible for his own actions. My friend, with all his defects, is so genuinely candid and kind-hearted, that he will excuse the liberty I am taking with his character, in using it as an illustration, and I know well that he will readily acknowledge the truth of the portrait. He will not be displeased should others also recognize it, for it forms an indirect apology that may set him right with many who may have imagined that he had intentionally offended them. I will even mention a few instances of his strange confusion and forgetfulness. When he was preparing to leave England for this country, he called at the India House for a 'shipping order' for himself and family. He found himself suddenly in a crowd of gay young clerks, in whose presence he was somewhat abruptly questioned as to the number and names of his children. He had only three of those inestimable treasures; but there was such an instantaneous anarchy in his brain, that he was obliged to confess he could not answer the question. Every one stared at him with astonishment, and set him down for a madman. He sneaked painfully out of the room, and had scarcely closed the door, when his memory was as clear and precise as ever. I shall venture upon another anecdote, equally characteristic. He received some time ago a pair of marriage tickets. He was eager to acknowledge the compliment, and pay his grateful respects to the young bride; but bad health, official duties, obliviousness, and a spirit of procrastination, all combined to occasion the postponement of his visit. He called at last, and experienced his usual stultification. In the presence of a number of visitors, all of whose eyes were intently fixed upon him, he observed that he was glad to see so many persons present, as it convinced him that the honeymoon was over and that he had not called earlier than delicacy and custom permitted. He had forgotten that a whole year had slipped away since he had received his ticket! There was a general laugh, and the lady goodhumouredly sent for a fine strapping baby, as a still stronger proof that his

visit was perfectly well-timed. I cannot resist the temptation to add one more example of his occasional perplexities. He was acquainted with two brothers, of whom the one was a literary man and the other a merchant. The latter died, and a few months after that event, my friend met the survivor. He at once confounded the dead man with the living, and in the course of conversation embraced an opportunity to express his regret to the supposed merchant at the deplorably bad success of his poor brother's published poems, adding in the freedom and plenitude of his confidence, a candid opinion (which could not now, he observed, reach the ears of the person referred to, or give him a moment's pain) that in devoting himself to literature he had sadly mistaken the nature of his own powers. My unhappy friend had hardly let fall the last word of his unconscious jest, when a light flashed across his brain, and he saw his error. The scene that ensued baffles all description. It would be difficult to say which of the two was the most severely vexed—the vain and irritable poetaster or the dreaming blunderer. I could easily multiply instances of my friend's excessive abstraction and laughable forgetfulness; but these are enough for my purpose. I will only add that he hardly ever addresses any person by his right name, and if suddenly called upon to introduce a friend to a strange circle, would be sure to make some extraordinary blunder, the absurdity of which would stare him in the face the moment after. He is sometimes so vexed by his almost incredible mistakes, that he vows in his despair he will never again attempt any intercourse with general society, however numerous or pressing may be the invitations of his friends. He knows too well, he says, that if any subject is especially unpleasing to his hearers, he is sure, by some horrible fatality, to bring it prominently forward; and if he attempts a compliment, he is ruined for ever. With the strongest ambition to be thought both sensible and good-natured, he often acts as if he were either a perfect idiot, or one of the most malicious of human beings.

The axioms most familiar to men of the world, are passed from one tongue to another without much reflection. They are merely *parroted.* Some critics have thought that the advice which *Polonius,* in the tragedy of *Hamlet,* gives his son, on his going abroad, exhibits a degree of wisdom wholly inconsistent with the general character of that weak and foolish old man. But in this case, as in most others of a similar nature, we find, on closer consideration, that what may seem at the first glance an error or oversight of Shakespeare's, is only another illustration of his accurate knowledge of human life. The precepts which the old man desires to fix in the mind of *Laertes,* are just such as he might have heard a hundred thousand times in his long passage through the world. They are not brought out from the depths of his own soul. They have only fastened themselves on his memory, and are much nearer to his tongue than to his heart. No one is surprised at the innumerable wise saws and proverbial phrases that issue from the lips of the most silly and ignorant old women in all ranks of life, in town and country, in cottages and in courts. In the conversation of the weakest-minded persons, we often find, as in that of *Polonius,* both "matter and impertinency mixed." His advice is not that of a philosopher, but of a courtier and man of the world. He echoes the common wisdom of his associates.

> "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:
> Take each man's censure*, but reserve thy judgment."

He is indebted to his court education for this mean and heartless maxim. To listen eagerly to the communications of others, and to conceal his own thoughts, is the first lesson that a courtier learns. Let us quote another specimen of his paternal admonitions.

> "Neither a borrower nor a lender be:
> For loan oft loses both itself and friend;
> And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."

* Opinion.

Polonius might have picked up this marvellous scrap of prudence in some petty tradesman's shop; not, however, in a pawnbroker's, for the sign of which it would form a very forbidding motto. It is similar in tone to the maxims of Poor Richard*. There are a few precepts in the parting advice of *Polonius* of a somewhat higher character; but they are only such as float about the world, and are repeated on occasion by all well-intentioned people. They are not of that high and original cast which Shakespeare would have put into the mouth of *Hamlet*, or any other thoughtful and noble-hearted personage.

It seems paradoxical to affirm, that men who are out of the world know more of the philosophy of its movements than those who are in it; but it is nevertheless perfectly true, and easily accounted for. The busy man is so rapidly whirled about in the vast machine, that he has not leisure to observe its motion. An observer stationed on a hill that overlooks a battle, can see more distinctly the operations of either army than the combatants themselves. They who have attained success by mere good fortune, are particularly ill-fitted to direct and counsel others who are struggling through the labyrinths of life. A shrewd observer, who has touched the rocks, is a better pilot than he who has passed through a difficult channel in ignorance of its dangers.

The extent of a person's knowledge of mankind is not to be calculated by the number of his years. The old, indeed, are always wise in their own estimation, and eagerly volunteer advice, which is not in all cases as eagerly received. The stale preparatory sentence of "*When you have come to my years, &c.*" is occasionally a prologue to the wearisome farce of second childhood. A Latin proverb says, that "experience teacheth." It sometimes does so, but not always. Experience

* "Wealth, as clearly shewn in the preface of our old Pennsylvanian Almanack, entitled 'Poor Richard Improved.' Written by Dr. Franklin."

cannot confer natural sagacity, and without that it is nearly useless. It is said to be an axiom in natural history, that a cat will never tread again the road on which it has been beaten; but this has been disproved in a thousand experiments. It is the same with mankind. A weak-minded man, let his years be few or numerous, will no sooner be extricated from a silly scrape, than he will fall again into the same difficulty in the very same way. Nothing is more common than for old women (of either sex) to shake with a solemn gravity their thin grey hairs, as if they covered a repository of gathered wisdom, when perchance some clear and lively head upon younger shoulders has fifty times the knowledge with less than half the pretension. We are not always wise in proportion to our opportunities of acquiring wisdom, but according to the shrewdness and activity of our observation. Nor is a man's fortune in all cases an unequivocal criterion of the character of his intellect* or his knowledge of the world. Men in business acquire a habit of guarding themselves very carefully against the arts of those with whom they are brought in contact in their commercial transactions; but they are, perhaps, better versed in goods and securities than in the human heart. They wisely trust a great deal more to law papers, than to "the human face divine," or any of those indications of character which are so unerringly perused by a profound observer. A great dramatic poet can lift the curtain of the human heart; but mere men of business must act always in the dark, and, taking it for granted that every individual, whatever his ostensible character, may be a secret villain, they will have no transactions with their fellow-creatures, until they have made "assurance double sure," and secured themselves from the possibility of roguery and imposition. They carry this habit of caution and mistrustfulness to

* There are some few professions, indeed, in which success is a pretty certain indication of learning or of genius.

such a melancholy extreme, that they will hardly lend a guinea to a father or a brother without a regular receipt. They judge of all mankind by a few wretched exceptions. Lawyers have a similar tendency to form partial and unfavorable opinions of their fellow-creatures; because they come in contact with the worst specimens of humanity, and see more of the dark side of life than other men. Of all classes of men, perhaps the members of the medical profession have the best opportunity of forming a fair and accurate judgment of mankind in general, and it is gratifying to know that none have a higher opinion of human nature.

It is observable, that men are very much disposed to "make themselves the measure of mankind," or, in other words, when they paint their fellow-creatures, to dip their brush in the colours of their own heart.

"All seems infected that the infected spy,
As all seems yellow to the jaundiced eye."

On the other hand, a frank and noble spirit observes the world by the light of its own nature;—and indeed all who have studied mankind without prejudice or partiality, and with a wide and liberal observation, have felt that man is not altogether unworthy of being formed after the image of his Maker.

Though I have alluded to the tendency of some particular professions to indurate the heart and limit or warp the judgment, I should be sorry, indeed, if the remarks that I have ventured upon this subject, should be regarded as an avowal of hostility towards any class whatever of my fellow-creatures. I should be guilty of a gross absurdity and injustice if I did not readily admit, that intellect and virtue are not confined to one class or excluded from another. Men are, generally speaking, very much the creatures of circumstance; but there is no condition of life, in which the soul has not sometimes asserted her independence of all adventitious distinctions; and there is no trade or profession, in which we do not meet with men who are an honour to human nature.

TWO LANDSCAPES.

ENGLISH AND INDIAN.

I stood upon an English hill,
And saw the far meandering rill,
A vein of liquid silver, run
Sparkling in the summer sun;
While adown that green hill's side,
And along the valley wide,
Sheep, like small clouds touched with light,
Or like little breakers bright
Sprinkled o'er a smiling sea,
Seemed to float at liberty.

Scattered all around were seen
White cots on the meadows green,
Open to the sky and breeze,
Or peeping through the sheltering trees.
On rustic gateways, loosely swung,
Laughing children idly hung:
Oft their glad shouts, shrill and clear,
Came upon the startled ear,
Blended with the tremulous bleat
Of truant lambs, or voices sweet
Of birds that take us by surprise,
And mock the quickly-searching eyes.

Nearer sat a bright-haired boy,
Whistling with a thoughtless joy;
A shepherd's crook was in his hand,
Emblem of a mild command;
And upon his rounded cheek
Were hues that ripened apples streak.

Disease, nor pain, nor sorrowing
Touched that small Arcadian king.
His sinless subjects wandered free—
Confusion without anarchy.
Happier he upon his throne,
The breezy hill—though all alone—
Than the grandest monarchs proud
Who mistrust the kneeling crowd.
For *he* ne'er trembles for his fate,
Nor groans beneath the cares of state.

On a gently rising ground
The lovely valley's farthest bound,
Bordered by an ancient wood,
The cots in thicker clusters stood;
And a Church uprose between,
Hallowing the peaceful scene.
Distance o'er its old walls threw
A soft and dim cerulean hue,
While the sun-lit gilded spire
Gleamed as with celestial fire!

I have crossed the ocean-wave
Haply for a foreign grave—
Haply never more to look
On a British hill or brook—
Haply never more to hear
Sounds unto my childhood dear;—
Yet if sometimes on my soul
Bitter thoughts beyond control
Throw a shade more dark than night,
Soon upon the mental sight
Flashes forth a pleasant ray
Brighter, holier, than the day;

And unto that happy mood
All seems beautiful and good.

Though from home and friends we part,
Nature and the human heart
Still may sooth the wanderer's care,
And his God is every where !

Seated on a bank of green,
Gazing on an Indian scene,
I have dreams the mind to cheer,
And a feast for eye and ear.
At my feet a river flows,
And its broad face richly glows
With the glory of the sun,
Whose proud race is nearly run.
Ne'er before did sea or stream
Kindle thus beneath his beam,
Ne'er did miser's eye behold
Such a glittering mass of gold !
'Gainst the gorgeous radiance float
Darkly, many a sloop and boat,
While in each the figures seem
Like the shadows of a dream ;
Swift, yet passively, they glide
As sliders on a frozen tide.

Sinks the sun—the sudden night
Falls, yet still the scene is bright.
Now the fire-fly's living spark
Glances through the foliage dark,
And along the dusky stream
Myriad lamps with ruddy gleam

On the small waves float and quiver,
As if upon the favored river,
And to mark the sacred hour,
Stars had fallen in a shower.
For many a mile is either shore
Illumined with a countless store
Of lustres ranged in glittering rows;
Each a golden column throws
To light the dim depths of the tide;
And the moon in all her pride,
Though beauteously her regions glow,
Views a scene as fair below*.

Never yet hath waking vision
Wrought a picture more Elysian;
Never gifted poet seen
Aught more radiant and serene!
Though upon my native shore
'Mid the hallowed haunts of yore
There are scenes that could impart
Dearer pleasure to my heart,
Scenes that in the soft light gleam
Of each unforgotten dream,
Yet the soul were dull and cold
That its tribute could withhold
When Enchantment's magic wand
Waves o'er this romantic land!

Cossipore, Nov. 1839.

* This description has reference to the night of some religious festival.

THE ATOSSA BRIBE.

POPE AND THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

POPE left by his will, the care of his manuscripts, first to Lord Bolingbroke, and, in the event of his death, to Lord Marchmont, undoubtedly expecting, says Dr. Johnson, that they would be "proud of the trust and eager to extend his fame." It appears, however, that some time after Pope's death, Dodsley solicited preference as the publisher, and was told that the packet of papers had not been even looked at, and "whatever was the reason," adds Johnson, "the world has been disappointed of what was reserved for the next age." It is reasonable to suppose that amongst the manuscripts of Pope there must have been many interesting and valuable papers, but nothing of any value has yet appeared. Pope gave Bolingbroke the option of preserving or destroying the manuscripts, and it is probable, from the circumstances I am about to mention, that he chose the latter alternative. They never got into the possession of the Earl of Marchmont. A work entitled "*A Selection from the Papers of the Earls of Marchmont*," and published in 1831, by Sir George Rose, contains two letters from Lord Bolingbroke that are calculated to injure materially the memory of Pope, if they are not very closely and candidly considered. They are on the subject of Pope's Satire on the Duchess of Marlborough, included in his Epistle "*On the Characters of Women*," under the name of *Atossa*. To refresh the memory of the reader I shall here subjoin it.

> But what are these, to great Atossa's mind?
> Scarce once herself, by turns all womankind!
> Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
> Finds all her life one warfare upon earth:

Shines in exposing knaves, and painting fools,
Yet is whate'er she hates and ridicules.
No thought advances, but her eddying brain
Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
Full sixty years the world has been her trade,
The wisest fool much time has ever made.
From loveless youth to unrespected age,
No passion gratify'd except her rage.
So much the fury still outran the wit,
The pleasure miss'd her, and the scandal hit.
Who breaks with her, provokes revenge from hell,
But he's a bolder man who dares be well.
Her every turn with violence pursued,
Nor more a storm her hate than gratitude:
To that each passion turns, or soon or late;
Love, if it makes her yield, must make her hate:
Superiors? death! and equals? what a curse!
But an inferior not dependent? worse.
Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live:
But die, and she'll adore you—then the bust
And temple rise—then fall again to dust.
Last night her lord was all that's good and great;
A knave this morning, and his will a cheat.
Strange! by the means defeated of the ends,
By spirit robb'd of power, by warmth of friends,
By wealth of followers! without one distress
Sick of herself, through very selfishness!
Atossa, curs'd with every granted prayer,
Childless with all her children, wants an heir:
To heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store,
Or wanders, heaven directed, to the poor.

When Pope first published the Epistle, in which this character now occurs, he informed the public in an advertisement, that it contained *no character drawn from the life*, an assertion which Johnson insinuates Pope did not wish to be believed. In a note to the poem also, Pope stated that it was imperfect, because a portion of his subject was *vice too high* to be then exposed. It is certain that the characters of *Atossa*, *Philomedé* and *Cloe*, the only ones which are supposed to apply to particular individuals, were *subse-*

quently introduced. It is said by Warton that the lines on *Atossa* were brought to the notice of the Duchess of Marlborough, under the pretence that they were intended for the portrait of the Duchess of Buckingham; but she soon stopped the person reading them to her, and called aloud, "I cannot be so imposed upon; I see plainly enough for whom they are designed;" and then violently abused the author. It is added that her Grace was afterwards reconciled to Pope, courted his favor, and gave him *a thousand pounds to suppress the portrait;* which he accepted, "*it is said,*" by the persuasion of Mrs. M. Blount; and yet *after the Duchess's death,* it was both printed and published. "*This,*" says Warton, "*is the greatest blemish in our Poet's moral character.*" On which Bowles, one of the later editors of Pope, exclaims: "A blemish! call it rather, *if it be the fact,* the most shameful dereliction of every thing that was manly and honorable." Mr. Roscoe, another editor of Pope, is very indignant with Mr. Bowles for this censure, though advanced so hypothetically, and notwithstanding a subsequent avowal on the part of the latter that he did not give credit to so "base" a story. Roscoe supposes that Mr. Bowles must have meant it to be implied that Pope was guilty of the act, or he would not have characterized it by such expressions; but surely it is unreasonable and unjust to take this view of the matter, after Mr. Bowles had by his own account indignantly disavowed his having charged Pope with such disgraceful treachery and meanness. Bowles was only surprised at the comparatively moderate manner in which Warton had spoken of an act that without any personal reference to Pope, was of a nature *per se* that could hardly be too sternly condemned. Johnson, though he does not seem to have heard any thing of the bribe, thought the character of *Atossa* was published with no great honor to the writer's gratitude, for the Poet had received from the Duchess a great deal of personal attention. Until this publication of the Marchmont Papers the story of the thousand pound bribe rested

entirely on the authority of Horace Walpole; and Roscoe, Bowles, Campbell and others, had refused to credit it. The latter writer in his remarks on Pope, in his "*Specimens of the British Poets,*" observes that Warton, in relating the anecdote (after Walpole) adds a circumstance which contradicts the statement itself. "The Duchess's imputed character," says Campbell, "is said to have appeared in 1746, two years after Pope's death; Pope therefore could not have himself published it: and it is exceedingly improbable that the bribe ever existed." It is clear that Pope did not publish it, but in one of the two letters, which we shall now subjoin, Lord Bolingbroke asserts, that Pope just before his death *corrected and prepared it for the press,* which in a moral sense amounts to much the same thing:—

VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE TO HUGH EARL OF MARCHMONT*.

"Battersea, Monday.

"My dear Lord,—The arrival of your servant with the message from Lord Stair gives me an opportunity of telling you, that I continue in the resolution I mentioned to you last night, upon what you said to me from the Duchess of Marlborough. It would be a breach of that trust and confidence which Pope reposed in me, to give any one such of his papers as I think that no one should see. If there are any that may be injurious to the late duke or to her grace, even indirectly and covertly, as I hope there are not, they shall be destroyed: and you shall be a witness of their destruction. Copies of any such, I hope and believe, there are none abroad; and I hope the duchess will believe, I scorn to keep copies when I destroy originals. I was willing you should have these assurances under the hand of, my dear lord, your faithful and devoted humble servant,

"BOLINGBROKE."

VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE TO HUGH EARL OF MARCHMONT.

"Monday Morning.

"Our friend Pope, it seems corrected and prepared for the press, just before his death, an edition of the four Epistles that follow the Essay on

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* Hugh Earl of Marchmont came to his title about four years before Pope died. He was honored with a fine compliment in the poet's beautiful inscription in his grotto at Twickenham. He died 1794 in the eighty sixth year of his age, and left no male issue.

Man. They were then printed off, and are now ready for publication. I am sorry for it, because, if he could be excused for writing the character of Atossa formerly, there is no excuse for his design of publishing it, after he had received the favour* (*1000*l*.), you and I know; and the character of Atossa is inserted—I have a copy of the book. Warburton has the propriety of it, as you know. Alter it he cannot, by the terms of the will. Is it worth while to suppress the edition? or should her grace's friends say, as they may, from several strokes in it, that it was not intended to be her character? and should she despise it? If you come over hither, we may talk better than write on the subject. Adieu, my Lord."

Now that we have Walpole's authority supported by that of Bolingbroke, it becomes necessary to examine the subject with greater industry and earnestness. I do not wish it to be supposed that the letters of Bolingbroke, connected with the testimony of Walpole, have at all satisfied my mind of the guilt of Pope. But I was certainly at first a little staggered by them. Much, as Sir Roger de Coverley would have observed, might be said on both sides of the question. To begin then with the *dark* side, I may remark that Pope's poetical ambition was his "*ruling passion*," and we may consequently imagine that the suppression of one of his best things (for such is the character of *Atossa*, as a piece of sharp and finished satire) was a sacrifice that required a more than ordinary display of virtuous resolution. He can hardly be supposed to have been quite sincere, when he eloquently exclaimed,

> Cursed be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
> That tends to make one worthy man my foe.

Because it is inconsistent with his attack on the Duke of Chandos in the character of *Timon*, and the use he made of his celebrated satire upon Addison, which though written in anger, was published in cool blood twenty years after! The celebrated character of Addison was so much admired, and Pope was so well pleased with it himself, that his poetical vanity got the better of his humanity

and honor. Atterbury on his first perusal of the lines was struck with their energy and truth, and, as Roscoe remarks, with "*no very christian spirit,*" he advised the Poet, "*as he now knew where his strength lay, not to suffer it to remain unemployed.*" Pope seems to have taken the hint with equal readiness and success. Roscoe, who defends Pope's conduct on all occasions, with the usual partiality of an Editor, evinces a disposition to exculpate his conduct in the case of the satire on Addison; but as Sir William Blackstone has rightly observed, however the Poet might be excused for penning such a character of his friend, in the first transports of his indignation, it reflects no great honor on his feelings to have kept it so long by him, and then to publish it after Addison was in his grave, and to hand it down to posterity engrafted into one of his best productions. Roscoe is mistaken in thinking his endeavour to prove that Pope was not actuated by a long and implacable hatred, will be serviceable to his cause; for when he notices the fact, that from the time of Addison's first perusal of the satire to the day of his death, he always treated Pope with the utmost civility, he makes the case tell more strongly against the poet for his want of generosity. I believe the truth to be, that Pope was not moved by any violent animosity towards the memory of Addison when he published the verses, but that his ruling passion, or in other words his love of fame, made him do what must have been in direct opposition to his own conscience and his natural feelings. While Pope's treatment of Addison was certainly a blot on the former's moral reputation, it may be thought to afford some appearance of confirmation to the assertions of Bolingbroke and Walpole, with respect to the satire on the Duchess of Marlborough; because the man who could permit his ambition to overcome his sense of moral rectitude in one instance could do so in another. The two cases, however, are not exactly parallel. There is one important difference. Though Pope might have published an ill-natured satire to gratify his love of fame at the

expense of his better feelings, it does not follow that he would have been base enough to take a bribe. In fact, all that we know of Pope, is inconsistent with this feature of the charge against him. He was economical and "paper-sparing" to be sure, but he was by no means avaricious of wealth, and rejected many opportunities of making money, when the mode by which it was to be obtained implied the slightest interference with his personal independence*. He was also extremely liberal and even lavish in his pecuniary favors to persons in distress, and by a judicious management of his small means contrived to do more good than many who were equally well disposed and who had double his advantages. On this point, therefore, the probabilities are strongly against Bolingbroke and Walpole. Pope labored the character of *Atossa* with extraordinary care, and was so gratified by his success, that his "ruling passion" alone, independent of any nobler or more prudent motive, would have made him reject at

* He twice refused a pension, and Spence tells us, on the authority of Warburton and others, that "Pope never flattered any body for money in the whole course of his writings. Alderman Barber had a great inclination to have a stroke in his commendation inserted in some part of Pope's writings. He did not want money and he wanted fame. He would probably have given four or five thousand pounds to have been gratified in his desire, *and gave Mr. Pope to understand so much*; but Mr. Pope would never comply with such a baseness." We also find in Spence's Anecdotes that "Pope was offered a very considerable sum by the Duchess of Marlborough if he would insert a good character of the Duke, and he absolutely refused it." The knowledge of these offers of payment for praise might possibly have suggested, however unreasonably, the invention of the scandal respecting a supposed offer for the suppression of a satire, and the Poet's acceptance of it. Pope had also in his lifetime been accused of receiving a thousand pounds from the Duke of Chandos, and ungratefully returning the kindness with a satire on his patron. The receipt of the money he indignantly denied. He also may be said to have denied by anticipation the charge now considered when he proudly asserted that if he was a good poet, there was one thing upon which he valued himself and which was rare amongst good poets—a perfect independence. "I have never," he said, "flattered any man, nor ever received anything of any man for my verses." The old Duchess of Marlborough herself, who left many legacies to her friends, might have remembered the poet in her will if he had treated her with more attention and respect.

once the offer of a thousand pounds to suppress it. Hazlitt said, that Moore ought not to have published *Lalla Rookh,* which he thought was a public disappointment, for three thousand pounds, "for his fame was worth more than that." If Moore's reputation has so high a pecuniary value, Pope's was certainly not inferior even in that respect, and he ought and would not, have suppressed a master-piece of satire for her Grace's bribe, however he might have been influenced by other considerations. If he bartered his poetical fame for gold he would not have taken less to *suppress* than Moore took to *publish.* The former had quite as lofty an opinion of his own genius as the latter can entertain of his. But it is worse than idle to talk in this mercantile manner about poetical productions, and I do not mean, in alluding to Hazlitt's remark, to imply any agreement with his opinion respecting the merits of *Lalla Rookh.* The public generally were at least as much delighted with it as they expected to be. But to return to the point in question. Considering then that Pope valued poetical fame more than money, and was peculiarly punctilious on the score of his personal independence, and remarkably prudent and far-sighted on most worldly occasions, we may fairly conclude, even as a matter of mere policy, he would have rejected the supposed bribe, and not have placed himself in the power of so garrulous, violent and fickle a woman as the Duchess of Marlborough. It is pretty evident that Pope must be brought in guilty of ingratitude towards her grace, but not on account of a *pecuniary* favor, which forms the darker feature of the charge. Perhaps even ingratitude is too strong a term to be used in this case, for the old lady on the whole probably gave him a good deal more annoyance than pleasure with her wavering humours, and was as much indebted to Pope as Pope was to her. But even if we must eventually admit that the Poet's conduct was not wholly irreproachable, it may be easily shown that his accusers have not *proved* him to be so truly corrupt and contemptible as their stories would imply. On a hasty perusal

of the letters of Bolingbroke (who was described by the poet himself as his "Guide, Philosopher and Friend") I confess, I was not a little startled. I began to think Horace Walpole might be right after all, and Campbell, Roscoe and Bowles in a pleasing error. For a moment the case seemed decided. On a second consideration, however, I feel by no means disposed to place implicit confidence in the testimony of Bolingbroke, though coincident with that of Walpole. I shall explain some of those particulars which in addition to what has been already advanced, make me question the veracity of these two writers. In the first place then they were neither of them disinterested witnesses. On the contrary, Bolingbroke was actuated by what Johnson emphatically calls his "thirst of vengeance," and Horace Walpole was jealous of every author in existence, and was never on very cordial terms with Pope, though some little compliments may have passed between them. It was Walpole*, who said of Addison that "he died drunk;" and for the pleasure of saying something new and

* In the letter of Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, published by Lord Dover in 1833, Walpole tells his correspondent that Pope had suppressed in his edition of the Patriot King, a panegyric on Lord Lyttleton; and that he gives this fact on the authority of Lord Chesterfield and Lord Lyttleton, "*the latter of whom went to Bolingbroke to ask how he had forfeited his good opinion.*" To show what Walpole's spiteful tittle-tattle is worth, we have only to turn to a letter of Bolingbroke's to Hugh Earl of Marchmont in the Marchmont Papers, wherein he clearly states that the panegyric on Lyttleton was omitted, at that nobleman's own request. Bolingbroke's words are. – The publication you mention" (the Patriot King) "has brought no trouble upon me, though it has given occasion to many libels against me. They are of the lowest form, and seem to be held in the contempt they deserve. There I leave them, nor suffer a nest of hornets to disturb the quiet of my retreat. If these letters of mine come to your hands, your Lordship will find that I have left out all that was said of our friend Lyttleton in one of them. *He desired it might be so*, and I had the double mortification of concealing the good I had said of one friend and of revealing the turpitude of another." Lord Dover in a note to one of Walpole's letters asserts very erroneously, that Bolingbroke discovered what Pope had done during his (Pope's) life time, and *never forgave him for it*. Bolingbroke *might* have known it before Pope's death, but if so we may conclude that he had no objection to it then, as he was not the man to smother his passions.

surprising, and the gratification of his literary envy, he was not very scrupulous in adhering to the truth, when retailing his anecdotes of men of letters. The world would never have believed the story of the Atossa bribe on his authority alone, and even Bolingbroke's support will not save it from the eventual incredulity of mankind. It would have been as well, however, if the Editor of the Marchmont Papers had been discreet enough to omit the two letters, for they will leave a stain somewhere, and if we save Pope, Bolingbroke must be sacrificed. Lord Bolingbroke was during the life of the Poet, one of the most faithful and affectionate friends, and he wept over him in his helpless state of decay, with a passion almost feminine. It is, indeed, melancholy to reflect upon what trivial chances the warmest human friendship may be wrecked, and how suddenly its flame may be extinguished. Pope was scarcely cold in his grave before the man who had loved and mourned him like a brother, became inspired with an implacable hatred, and endeavoured to blast his memory with the malice of a demon. It appears, that on discovering that Pope had left his printed works to Warburton, whom Bolingbroke hated almost to madness, the latter was so stung with anger and jealousy, that he experienced a sudden revulsion of feeling, and thought only how he might revenge himself on the dead poet, as well as the living Churchman. Warburton had gained the affections of Pope by his subtle defence of *The Essay on Man,* and the poet's orthodoxy, which was more than questioned on account of the arguments and illustrations which Bolingbroke had insidiously contrived should be introduced into the poem. The theologian, though he defended the poem in public, seems to have opened the poet's eyes to the nature of the philosophy into which Bolingbroke had inveigled him, and Pope made several subsequent alterations in accordance with the views of Warburton. This was of course gall and wormwood to the philosophical Lord, and the theologian added fuel to his passion,

by making various manuscript strictures of a very free and ungentle nature, on a copy of Bolingbroke's "Letters on the Study and Use of History." These strictures Pope shewed to Bolingbroke, who received them, it is said, with irrepressible indignation. Pope, however, passionately loved Bolingbroke to the last*, and must have little expected, that his leaving him only his MSS., and assigning his printed works to Warburton, as his Editor, would have kindled such fierce and unrelenting anger, and stirred up such deadly strife. To give some reasonable colour to his enmity towards his deceased friend, Bolingbroke pretended to be enraged at a breach of trust on the part of Pope. The circumstances attending this transaction, were as follows:

Lord Bolingbroke's political tract of *The Patriot King* had been put into the hands of Pope, that he might procure the impression of a few copies, to be distributed amongst his Lordship's friends; which was accordingly done; but after the death of Pope, it appeared, that a much greater number (amounting it is said, to 1,500) had been taken off and left in the hands of the printer, who after Pope's death delivered them up to his Lordship.

* Pope, indeed, idolized him: when in company with him, he appeared with all the deference and submission of an affectionate scholar. He used to speak of him as a being of a superior order, that had condescended to visit this lower world; in particular, when the last comet appeared, and approached near the earth, he told some of his acquaintance, it was sent only to convey Lord Bolingbroke HOME AGAIN; just as a stage-coach stops at your door to take up a passenger. A graceful person, a flow of nervous eloquence, a vivid imagination, were the lot of this accomplished nobleman; but his ambitious views being frustrated in the early part of his life, his disappointments embittered his temper, and he seems to have been disgusted with all religions, and all governments. I have been informed from an eye-witness of one of his last interviews with Pope, who was then given over by the physicians, that Bolingbroke, standing behind Pope's chair, looked earnestly down upon him, and repeated several times, interrupted with sobs, "O, great God, what is man! I never knew a person that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or a warmer benevolence for all mankind." It is to be hoped that Bolingbroke profited by those remarkable words that Pope spoke in his last illness to the same gentleman who communicated the foregoing anecdote; "I am so certain of the soul's being immortal, that I seem even to feel it within me, as it were by intuition."—*Warton.*

Bolingbroke affected to be outrageously indignant at this "breach of trust," and employed Mallet, a mean and unprincipled scribbler of all work, to exaggerate and mis-represent the facts, and to hold up Pope to the execration of the world*. It was absurdly insinuated, that it was Pope's intention, had he survived Bolingbroke, to have sold the book on his own account, and at a large price. Pope, as D'Israeli observes, must have been a miserable calculator of *survivorships*, if he had built his hopes of profit, on such a foundation as this†. Warburton, "whose heart," Johnson says, "was yet warm with his legacy, and tender by the recent separation," apologised for Pope. His conduct was attributed to a desire of perpetuating the esteemed work of a friend, who might have capriciously destroyed it. The poet, it was said, could have no selfish motive; he could not gratify his vanity by publishing it as his own, nor his avarice by its sale, which could never have taken place before the death of its author, a circumstance, as was just intimated, not likely to occur during Pope's lifetime. The last Earl of Marchmont's account of this matter, as given to the honourable George Rose‡, makes it still more improbable that Pope should have been actuated by any unworthy motive. This account was published by Mr. A. Chalmers in the Biographical Dictionary. According to this statement, it appears, that some copies of *The Patriot King*, were

* Mallet (who is but the mouthpiece of his patron) objects that "scraps and fragments of these papers had been employed to swell a monthly Magazine." But is it likely that Pope would send parts of the work to a Magazine, and yet expect that they could be so used without a chance of the circumstance coming to the knowledge of Bolingbroke? If he *did* send fragments of the work to a Magazine, it is clear that he must have thought himself justified in so doing. It was not a secret act, and no one pretends that it was his object to provoke the hostility of Bolingbroke.

† Pope's death was a very slow one, and fully expected by himself. Had he been conscious of any impropriety with respect to the printing of The Patriot King, he might very easily and secretly have destroyed the entire impression.

‡ The father of the Editor of the Marchmont Papers.

printed and distributed with Bolingbroke's knowledge, to Lord Cornbury, Lord Marchmont, Sir W. Wyndham, Mr. Lyttleton, and various gentlemen of respectability. A copy was given by Pope to Mr. Allen, of Prior Park, near Bath; and he was so captivated with it, that he pressed Pope to allow him to print an edition at his own expense, using such caution as should effectually prevent a single copy getting into the possession of any one, before the author's consent should be obtained. Under a solemn engagement to this effect, Pope reluctantly consented. The edition was packed up and deposited in a warehouse, of which Pope kept the key*. Now as there was nothing in the book, calculated to

* Mr. Rose's report of Lord Marchmont's statement includes the following additional [illegible]:—"On the circumstance being made known to Lord Bolingbroke, who was then a guest in his own house at Battersea with Lord Marchmont, to whom he had lent it for two or three years, his lordship was in great indignation, to appease which Lord Marchmont sent Mr. Grevenkop (a German gentleman who had travelled with him, and was afterwards in the household of Lord Chesterfield, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland) to bring out the whole edition, of which a bonfire was immediately made on the terrace of Battersea." It cannot be collected from the foregoing statement whether the discovery alluded to occurred before or after the death of Pope, and it is certain that it is not consistent with Mallet's account, which was drawn up, it is supposed, under Bolingbroke's superintendence. It is contradicted still more positively by Lord Bolingbroke himself in a letter (in the Marchmont Papers) addressed to Lord Marchmont. The letter commences as follows.

"*Battersea, Oct.* 22, 1774.

"My dear Lord,—Since you will take the trouble of receiving from Mr. Wright the edition of that paper, which our late friend caused so treacherously to be made; and since I mean to have it only to destroy it, the bringing it hither would be useless. Be so good therefore as to see it burned at your house, to help to dry which is the best use it can be put to. If your Lordship pleases to speak earnestly to Wright of the necessity that no copy be left, and of your desire and mine, that he would be attentive to discover whether any be left, and to give notices of any the least apprehension of a publication by that means, you will oblige me extremely."

From this letter it would seem that Lord Marchmont was not under the same roof with Bolingbroke at the time alluded to, and that the book was not burnt at Battersea nor any where else until after the death of Pope, which occurred on the 30th of May of the same year, or nearly five months previous to the date of Bolingbroke's letter. Sir George Rose, however, I suppose on the authority of Lord Marchmont's statement, though he does not say so, asserts in a note that notwithstanding what is said in the above letter the book was burnt at Battersea. This is very unlikely.

injure Bolingbroke in any way, by its publication, which he only objected to because it had not received *his last corrections*, and there is no conceivable bad motive by which Pope could have been actuated, it is clear that the vindictive rage of his Lordship was excited by another cause, and *that* cause was Pope's preference of Warburton as the Editor of his works*. Mrs. Blount warmly assured Mr. Spence, that "she could take her oath, that *The Patriot King* was printed by Pope, out of his excessive esteem for the writer and his abilities," which, as Roscoe remarks, is the only rational mode of accounting for the transaction. Now when we find that Bolingbroke's furious passion made him condescend to connect himself with such a personage as Mallet, of whom Johnson tells us it had been said that "he was the only Scotchman that Scotchmen did not commend," and who was "ready for any *dirty job*;" when we trace the unrelenting acrimony with which, in conjunction with this ready hireling, he endeavoured to blast the memory of his old friend; let it be put to any candid and considerate reader, whether it is not more likely, that Bolingbroke coined or rather confirmed a malignant falsehood, than that Pope was guilty of the corruption imputed to him. It is true, that at first sight, there is something

Sir George Rose has a very violent note to the second of the two letters I have already quoted, and does not hesitate to use language respecting Pope that would have been worthy of Mallet himself. He calls him *crooked-minded* —takes it for granted that he is guilty of all that he is charged with, and describes his treatment of the Duchess as an act of singular baseness and malignity. No allusion is made by the Editor to his father's repetition of the late Lord Marchmont's statement, which it can hardly be supposed he had not seen.

* D'Israeli accounts for Bolingbroke's rage in the same manner. Ruffhead, however, in his Life of Pope, attributes it entirely to the hostile criticism of Warburton already noticed, and asserts that though Bolingbroke continued after that circumstance to caress Pope, he entertained for him a secret hatred on account of his friendship with Warburton. But this is not credible, for whatever were Bolingbroke's faults he cannot fairly be suspected of such mean and cold-blooded hypocrisy. He might have cloaked the real cause of his anger, but he was not such a consummate hypocrite as to shed tears of apparent tenderness over the man he hated.

against this view of the matter in the circumstance of his Lordship's making a kind of appeal to the Earl of Marchmont's knowledge of the bribe; but it must be remembered that we have not the Earl's reply before us, and that it is possible he might have denied the possession of the imputed knowledge, or that at all events, he might only have heard of it as a rumour raised by some of Pope's numerous enemies, and Bolingbroke, to serve his own purpose, alluded to it as an indisputable fact with which they were mutually acquainted. Perhaps Bolingbroke himself was the first who communicated it to the Earl. The public ought not to give too hasty and ready a credence to the assertions of so interested a witness as Lord Bolingbroke, against one, who, whether as a man or a poet, is entitled to our admiration; for his actions were generally of an amiable and honorable character, and his works will delight and instruct mankind, as long as the language in which they are written shall endure*.

STANZAS TO A FEMALE FRIEND.

I.

FAIR Lady, as though friendship's chain seem broken
It holds, with wonted force, this faithful heart,
I fain reserve's delusive veil would part,
And learn if haply yet some lingering token
Of old regard and tenderness suppress
Remaineth lurking in thy gentle breast.

* Mrs. Thomson in her "Memoirs of Sarah Duchess of Marlborough," lately published (1839), makes no allusion to the Marchmont Papers, and merely repeats, after Walpole and Warton, the old story of the bribe.

II.

Fate with no heavier blow nor keener sting
May crush or goad us, when the genial power
Of friendship fails, and trifles of an hour
Rend each dear link that from our early spring
Held us in pleasant thrall. The cup of life
Bears naught so bitter as the drops of strife!

III.

Alas! I may not meet thee in the crowd,
Unmoved—for in thy sweet, familiar face
The hallowed past hath left a startling trace:—
At once, with sudden impulse, fond and proud,
My bosom heaves—unconsciously my feet
Approach thee—and my lips thy name repeat!

IV.

But oh! the deadly pang, the freezing chill,
When by the calm gaze of that altered eye
The spell is broken! Lady, if the sigh
That meets thine ear could say what feelings thrill
This troubled breast, or what my sad looks meant,
Methinks e'en thy stern coldness might relent.

V.

I cannot think that all our mutual dreams
Were false as twilight shadows, nor believe
Thine heart could change, or words like thine deceive:
And still, as travellers for the sun's bright beams
Up-gaze in hope, though clouds may lour awhile,
I wait and watch for thy returning smile.

THE DAY OF LIFE.

I.

Oh! blue were the mountains,
And gorgeous the trees,
And stainless the fountains,
And pleasant the breeze;
A glory adorning
The wanderer's way,
In Life's sunny morning,
When young Hope was gay!

II.

The blue hills are shrouded,
The groves are o'ercast,
The bright streams are clouded,
The breeze is a blast;
The light hath departed
The dull noon of Life,
And Hope, timid-hearted,
Hath fled from the strife!

III.

In fear and in sadness,
Poor sports of the storm,
Whose shadow and madness
Enshroud and deform;
Ere Life's day is closing
How fondly we crave
The dreamless reposing—
The calm of the grave.

STANZAS.

Oh! visit not
My couch of dreamless sleep,
When even thou shalt be forgot
By this so faithful breast;
But let the stranger watch my silent rest
With eyes that will not weep!

II.

Oh! come not, Maid!
I crave no sigh from thee,
E'en when my mouldering frame is laid
Within the cold dull grave;
For the yew shall moan, and the night-wind rave,
A fitting dirge for me!

III.

Oh! weep not, Love!
While grief were agony,—
Wait 'till the balm of time remove
The fever of the brain,
And dear, though mournful dreams alone remain
Of me and misery!

IV.

Oh! then, fair Maid!
By twilight linger near
The rustling trees whose green boughs shade
My lonely place of rest;
And hallow thou the turf that wraps my breast
With pity's purest tear!

BIRTH-DAY STANZAS TO MY CHILD.

I.

My spirit revels deep in dreams to-day;
I dimly recognize the scenes around;
For though thy fairy form is far away,
And still thy father treads this foreign ground,
He sees thee in thy native fields at play,
And hears thy light laugh's sweet familiar sound
Merry and musical as birds in May!

II.

This is thy natal morn—a date how dear!
How many tender memories mark the time!
How oft thy prattle charmed a parent's ear,
And soothed his soul in this ungenial clime!
How oft, when impious discontent was near,
Thy sinless smile hath kindled hopes sublime,
And made the gloom of exile seem less drear!

III.

Though now in weary loneliness I learn
What countless miseries broken ties may bring,
Though vainly to deserted rooms I turn
For one domestic charm, I will not fling
A shade upon this hour, nor idly yearn
For pleasures passed on Time's too rapid wing;
Nor pine at Fate's decrees, however stern.

IV.

Dear Child! to thee devoted is the day,
Thy brethren, (gentle twins,) and she who bears
A mother's sacred name, are proud and gay;
The small white English cottage sweetly wears
A festal look, while friends and kindred pay
Their tribute-praise, foretel thy future years,
And paint the brightness of thine onward way.

V.

And when the cheerful feast is nearly o'er,
The wine-cup shall be filled, and thy dear name
Be fondly pledged each elder guest's before,
Regardful of the time; a pleasing shame
Shall flush thy cheek; and then the brilliant store
Of Birth-day gifts shall childhood's dreams inflame,
While aged hearts remember days of yore.

VI.

And yet, 'mid all this mirthfulness and pride,
The sudden tears shall dim thy mother's eye,
And thou, sweet boy, shalt sadly cast aside
Thy glittering gauds, and stand in silence by,
While prayers are breathed for him by fate denied
On England's happy shores to live or die,
Or cross again the severing waters wide.

VII.

But this blest day no cares shall shade my heart,
Save such as pass like clouds o'er summer skies;
As once thy presence bade despair depart,
So now before thy memory sorrow flies;
And almost momently around me start
Dear forms of home, that wake a sweet surprise,
Like visions raised by some enchanter's art!

Calcutta, Oct. 19, 1831.

ON PHYSIOGNOMY.

The lineaments of the body will discover those natural inclinations of the mind which dissimulation will conceal or discipline will suppress.

Lord Bacon.

I knew by his face there was something in him.

Shakespeare.

I am so apt to frame a notion of every man's humour or circumstances by his looks, that I have sometimes employed myself from Charing-cross to the Royal Exchange in drawing the characters of those who have passed by me. When I see a man with a sour rivelled face, I cannot forbear pitying his wife: and when I meet with an open ingenuous countenance, think on the happiness of his friends, his family and relations.

Addison.

Physiognomy is a science which most people smile at, and which all practise. It is more easily ridiculed than abandoned. The old and the young, the wise and the foolish, the shrewd and the simple, the suspicious and the confiding, all trust more or less, either for good or for evil, to the outward and visible signs of the internal spirit. The philosophical testimonies in favor of this science are sufficiently respectable both in character and number. In the olden time the sages of Egypt and of India cultivated it with enthusiasm, and it is supposed that it was from those countries that Pythagoras introduced it into Greece.

Aristotle treated largely of the Physiognomy, not only of man, but of the brute creation. After his time many Greek authors wrote treatises upon the subject, of which a collection was formed and published in 1780. Like Medicine and Astrology it was for a long time associated with divination, and they who followed it as a profession did not confine their scrutiny to the mental charac-

ter of the countenance, but endeavoured to trace in its lineaments the destiny of the individual, as the fortune-teller of the present day peruses the lines of the hand. It subsequently fell into a temporary disrepute.

It was about the commencement of the eighteenth century that the science was revived. Several treatises on the subject were then published, both in England and on the Continent, by able and learned men; but Lavater was the first writer of eminence in modern times who made it fashionable and popular. His work on the subject was got up in so splendid a style and with such numerous illustrative engravings, and the author himself was so much esteemed for his many personal virtues, that though he was opposed by a few of the critics of the day he speedily obtained a large body of disciples, and his writings were translated into various languages. A man more truly pious, or more candid and benevolent, the world has rarely known. His character would suffer nothing by a comparison even with that of Fenelon, whom he in many respects resembled. He was not a profound philosopher, but that he was a man of genius no one can have a moment's doubt who has read his celebrated work on Physiognomy, and the autobiographical notices of his early life. It is true that the former is often much too fanciful. It is also too verbose and desultory, and abounds in useless repetitions. These defects must be at once admitted; but they are redeemed by so many acute and ingenious observations, by so many noble sentiments, and by such a pervading spirit of philanthropy and religion, that the author's enthusiasm is almost irresistibly contagious. Though his ardour in the illustration of his favorite science beguiles him occasionally into very untenable positions, and leads him to speak somewhat too decidedly upon points that are purely speculative, his frank acknowledgments of error, and the curious avowal, more than once repeated, that he knows little or nothing of the subject notwithstanding his long study and experience, disarm the

anger of the reader, and prepare him to make a liberal allowance for every imperfection.

Lavater introduced the study of *osseal* physiognomy. All preceding authors confined themselves chiefly to a consideration of what has been called *pathognomy*, which includes only those moveable or accidental or transient appearances in the muscles or soft parts of the human face which betray the vicissitudes of feeling and of thought, while they neglected those permanent outlines which indicate the general and fixed character of the heart and mind. He was not only a physiognomist in the ordinary and limited sense of the term, but as much of a *craniologist* as Gall or Spurzheim, though he did not pretend to the same degree of [redacted]atural knowledge; nor attempt, as they did, to divide the mind into distinct and opposite faculties, and assign them their several little bumps or cells.

Lavater advises the student to place a collection of sculls or casts of heads of celebrated or well known persons in one horizontal row. After comparing these sculls or casts carefully with each other, and each with the intellectual or moral character of the individual, the student may proceed to the consideration of the external conformation of unknown persons. He who after comparing the heads of men of various degrees of mental power can remain of opinion that there is no difference between the sculls of the highest and lowest order of intellect, or in other words that mind leaves no fixed and legible traces upon matter, whether bone or flesh, must have a cranium of his own that would be a puzzle to the phrenologist, were it to indicate any portion of intelligence beyond the merest instinct. Perhaps there is no instance in the whole history of human greatness of a man of magnificent genius with a head, of which the frontal portion was at once both low and narrow. We occasionally indeed meet with persons of considerable capacity whose foreheads may exhibit either the one or the other of these defects; but never

both: and the defect is invariably redeemed by the opposite advantage of height or breadth. But though genius refuses to reside in a forehead at once both low and narrow, it is not every high or broad one that is honored by its presence. A large forehead is not always intellectual. Its peculiarity of shape and inclination is of great importance. If it either falls too far back from the face or too much overhangs it, though in other respects of fair proportion, it is indicative of mental imbecility, and approaches too nearly in character to the heads of animals. The old Grecian artists had so strong an impression of the unintellectual aspect of a violently retreating forehead, that in their anxiety to avoid it in their ideal portraits they almost ran into the opposite extreme; and though they never allowed it to bulge out and overhang the lower features, they made it *nearly* perpendicular, which in the living subject denotes dulness and incapacity. The forehead of an idiot generally either hangs clumsily, like a projecting rock, over a wild and dreary face, or falls directly back, as we find it in the lower animals.

It is very rarely that we find amongst those who deny the truth of Physiognomy, a man of much acuteness or reflection. The few reasonable persons who are met with in the ranks of its opponents are generally influenced more by a mistrust of their own physiognomical discernment, or an apprehension of the mischief and injustice which follow erroneous judgments, than by any serious conviction that the mind is not generally stamped upon the features. To those who object to the science on the ground of its uncertainty, as regards human skill, there are two answers. In the first place truth itself is not to be rejected or denied, because its followers are occasionally at fault: and in the second, let us reason as cautiously and as coldly as we may, we can never wholly resist the impressions which we receive from the perusal of a human face.

There is no science, however useful or important, the professors

of which have not fallen into egregious errors. It is not less unreasonable to reject Physiognomy because the physiognomist is occasionally mistaken, than it would be to reject theology, medicine, and even mathematics on similar grounds. The teachers and students are alike liable to error in them all. Science is fixed, but man is fallible. Lavater acknowledges his repeated blunders, without supposing that his own mistakes form an argument against the truth of his favorite science; but Gall and Spurzheim seem to think themselves as infallible as the Pope, and have so completely identified themselves with the science which they teach, that to confess an error, however slight, in their minutest details or their wildest speculations, would be tantamount to an admission [redacted] the broad principles of phrenology, are like the baseless fabric of a vision. In a lecture delivered by the latter at Liverpool in May 1822, he said that if but one tender and affectionate mother could be proved to be deficient in the organ of philoprogenitiveness or the love of children (a bump at the back of the head), or not have it strongly developed, he would give up Phrenology at once! A decision of this nature is equally unphilosophical and presumptuous. It is like the dogmatism of a religious enthusiast, who stakes the cause of Christianity on the accuracy of his own interpretation.

A profound study of Physiognomy would perhaps enable us to trace the origin of our ideas of beauty. It is a problem that has excruciated many subtle intellects. I may hazard an opinion, that it is not a quality of matter. The face, *per se*, has probably no more relation to beauty or ugliness than a lamp or transparent vase that betrays the light or colour from within. Beauty is a moral or intellectual quality shining through material forms. Those forms are the most pleasing to the eye which are commonly the medium of the mental quality that we most admire. Mr. Burke, with all his ingenuity and acuteness, seems to have been more successful in showing what beauty is not, than what it is.

I cannot adopt his vague and unsatisfactory definition. "It is for the greater part," he says, "some quality in bodies acting mechanically upon the human mind by the intervention of the senses." Some late writers on the subject, among whom are Mr. Alison and Mr. Jeffrey, suppose that in reality no one form of matter is more beautiful than another, and that all our ideas of beauty are the result of habit and association. This theory has often been opposed with considerable ingenuity. Mr. Hazlitt, in his little essay on the subject, though he does not define what beauty is, endeavours to show that it is in some way inherent in the object.

To the argument that beauty is a mere quality of mind, it may perhaps be objected that there are certain material objects, unconnected with life or spirit, such as a flower or a shell, which are admired as soon as seen. But even in new and inanimate objects the mind invariably discovers some kind of analogy, however slight or remote, with its own nature. The analogy is not the less decisive, because it is sometimes a secret and almost unconscious process. It is in this way that poets breathe life and passion into all external things, and sympathize with their own creations. The more imagination we possess, the deeper is our sense of beauty. The Medicean Venus, that excites some men to an ecstacy of admiration, is regarded by others whose corporeal vision is in no degree inferior, with absolute indifference. Smollet thought contemptuously of it. The effect depends greatly upon the mind of the observer. Persons of exquisite delicacy of taste and feeling recognize traits of a congenial spirit in the smooth elegance and the flowing outlines of the face and figure. We must be capable of conceiving and of sympathizing with the internal spirit, before its outward symbols can awaken a genuine enthusiasm. On this account no man who has not a touch of gentleness or nobility in his own nature can study the science of Physiognomy with complete success. He might quickly discover his own crimes or weaknesses in the faces

of kindred characters, but the signs of a higher spirit would escape his penetration, or present a tacit reproof of his own self-esteem, that would render him quite unable to peruse them with an impartial judgment. There is a great deal of truth in the common saying, that a person has generally the good or ill qualities which he attributes to mankind. If Swift had written a work on Physiognomy, it would have been very different from that of Lavater. The more the latter studied the countenances of men, the higher became his opinion of our internal nature. But the cold, the stern, the suspicious and sarcastic English Satirist would have found nothing amiable or glorious in the "human face divine." He only who unites in himself the rarely connected qualities of an enlarged and liberal mind with a capacity for minute observation, and a knowledge of the world with a pure and gentle heart, can hope to attain an equal facility in tracing the signs of vice or virtue.

The opponents of Physiognomy found their chief objections on isolated facts, and accidental circumstances. They are people who have a strange prejudice against all broad principles and general rules. With them a slight mistake even in the language of a proposition decides its fate. They rejoice at a flaw in the indictment. Thus if they happen for once in their lives to meet with an honest face on the shoulders of a rogue, or to have discovered a professed physiognomist in error, or to have proved their own want of physiognomical discernment by some still greater blunder, we are gravely assured that appearances are deceitful, and are called upon to believe that the soul of man is never legible in his face. They conclude that the aspect of humanity is a continual lie, because they have in some instances failed to read it rightly, or because certain individuals by a cunning misuse of their features, and others by some accident in life or some unkindly freak of nature, form exceptions to the ordinary correspondence between mind and matter. Physiognomy is a

science which can never admit of mathematical precision. But entirely to reject it on that account is illogical and absurd. The physician's art is equally uncertain. The full and blooming cheek is a sign of health and strength, and the pale and thin one of sickness and debility. The physician is guided by these tokens. Should they sometimes happen to deceive him, (such occurrences being comparatively rare) he does not the less regard them in other cases as symbolical of the internal condition of the system. He acts upon his general experience. If amongst a thousand apples, of a fresh and rosy look, there should be five or six that are rotten at the core, it would be ridiculous and childish to dispute, on account of these exceptions, the general assertion, that the quality of fruit is indicated by its appearance.

Notwithstanding our occasional mistakes and disappointments, the human face is still like a book of reference which we perpetually consult. We study the features of a stranger before we admit him to our confidence. We decide upon his character at a single glance, and with infinitely more truth and precision than we could arrive at by a more lengthened and laborious process. Looks are more legible than words, and far less deceitful. We can better command our phrases than our features, though the former are by no means so expressive of the movements of the soul. Even deeds are more equivocal than looks, because the motives which give them their real character are often too deeply shrouded in the heart to be discovered by the world.

Our first impressions are commonly the truest. The general character of the face, and the peculiar expression which is stamped upon the features by the thoughts and feelings of many years, flash into our minds with more force and clearness when we meet them as a novelty than when they become more familiar. Thus the first view of a landscape or a city impresses the real effect more vividly on the fancy than any subsequent or more deliberate observation.

We cannot easily conquer the feeling of repugnance which is sometimes excited by the countenance of a stranger. Neither can we always explain the cause, even to ourselves.

I do not like thee, Doctor Fell;
The reason why I cannot tell.

Even when subsequent familiarity, an exchange of kind offices, and a strong desire to shake off an apparently ungenerous prejudice, suppress for a time all harsh and unfriendly thoughts, some accidental exposure of character, either in word, deed, or look, is almost sure to confirm our first impression. There is a curious passage in Gessner's Life of Lavater, that may serve as illustration. I quote the translation by Thomas Holcroft*.

"A person to whom he was an entire stranger was once announced, and introduced to him as a visitor. The first idea that rose in his mind, the moment he saw him, was—'This man is a murderer.'—He however suppressed the thought as unjustifiably severe and hasty, and conversed with the person with his accustomed civility. The cultivated understanding, extensive information, and ease of manner which he discovered in his visitor, inspired him with the highest respect for his intellectual endowments; and his esteem for these, added to the benevolence and candour natural to him, induced him to disregard the unfavourable impression he had received from his first appearance with respect to his moral character. The next day he dined with him by invitation; but soon after it was known that this accomplished gentleman was one of the assassins of the late king of Sweden; and he found it advisable to leave the country as speedily as possible."

Rousseau somewhere speaks of a man in whose countenance he traced certain obscure and mysterious indications of an evil character, and he accordingly resolved to avoid him quietly while there was yet peace between them; for he felt, he knew not why,

* The son of this well-known writer, Villiers Holcroft, died in Calcutta a few years ago. He lived and died neglected. His death, I believe, was not even announced in the newspaper obituaries.

that it could not long continue. Every man has experienced from repulsive features the same strong but undefinable impressions. Rousseau, however, often fell into great mistakes, for his fancy outran his observation. He regarded the face as a book in which he might read strange matters, and was far too whimsical and distrustful to make a just and accurate physiognomist. In the account of the controversy between him and Hume there is a curious and characteristic instance of his too fanciful interpretation of the face. It is given in Rousseau's own words.

"As we were sitting one evening, after supper, silent by the fire-side, I caught his (Hume's) eyes intently fixed on mine, as indeed happened very often: and that in a manner of which it is very difficult to give an idea. At that time he gave me a steadfast, piercing look, mixed with a sneer which greatly disturbed me. To get rid of the embarrassment I lay under, I endeavoured to look full at him in my turn; but in fixing my eyes against his I felt the most inexpressible terror, and was obliged soon to turn them away. The speech and physiognomy of the good David is that of an honest man; but where, great God! did this good man borrow those eyes he fixes so sternly and unaccountably on those of his friends?

"The impression of this look remained with me, and gave me much uneasiness. My trouble increased even to a degree of fainting; and if I had not been relieved by an effusion of tears, I had been suffocated. Presently after this I was seized with the most violent remorse; I even despised myself; till at length, in a transport which I still remember with delight, I sprang on his neck, embraced him eagerly; while almost choked with sobbing, and bathed in tears, I cried out, in broken accents, *No, no, David Hume cannot be treacherous. If he be not the best of men, he must be the basest of mankind.* David Hume politely returned my embraces, and, gently tapping me on the back, repeated several times, in a good-natured and easy tone, *Why, what, my dear Sir! Nay, my dear Sir! Oh, my dear Sir!* He said nothing more. I felt my heart yearn within me. We went to bed; and I set out the next day for the country."

Hume answers all this by explaining, that like most studious men, he was subject to reveries and fits of absence, in which he sometimes had a fixed look or stare. A cool and sober physiognomist could not have made so ridiculous a mistake as that of Rousseau.

Thomas Moore has a poetical fling at physiognomy.

"In vain we fondly strive to trace
The soul's reflection in the face;
In vain we dwell on lines and crosses
Crooked mouths, or short proboscis:
Boobies have looked as wise and bright
As Plato or the Stagyrite;
And many a sage and learned skull
Has peeped through windows dark and dull."

This may be wit, but it is not philosophy. I have answered its *logic* by anticipation, in noticing the ordinary objections. He has even Holy Writ against him. "Wisdom maketh the countenance bright*." Spenser was not only a greater poet, but a better philosopher than Moore, and saw the strict analogy between the mind and body.

"For of the soul the body form doth take."
Spenser.

Has nature bestowed upon man such an admirable mechanism of features for no useful end? The purport of outward expression is to show what passes in the mind, and as we have already said, it is far more true than words. Speech, it has been wittily observed, was given to man to conceal his thoughts. But looks cannot often deceive the most inexperienced of mankind. All children have skill in physiognomy. It is our mother tongue. We understand it in our cradles. It is universal. Even animals can read it in the faces of their kind, and sometimes in that of men. It is wonderful with what precision we peruse the countenances of those on whom our hopes and happiness depend. Thus boys at school exhibit a remarkable quickness in discovering the mood of their master in the condition of his features—

"Well do the boding tremblers learn to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face."

* Lavater also gives Scriptural authority for the truth of physiognomy, and makes the following quotation.—" A man may be known by his *look*, and one that has understanding by his countenance, when thou meetest him."

"There is surely," says Sir Thomas Browne, "a physiognomy which master mendicants observe; whereby they instantly discover a merciful aspect, and will single out a face wherein they spy the signatures and marks of mercy; for there are mystically in our faces certain characters, which carry in them the motto of our souls, wherein he that can read A, B, C, may read our natures." Lavater describes a particular kind of nose which in his opinion is of more worth than a kingdom. This is somewhat too extravagant, but the value of an honest and noble face can hardly be over-rated. Montaigne says, that on the mere credit of his open aspect, persons who had no other knowledge of his character had the most implicit confidence in his honor. He gives some curious illustrations of this fact. Even Moore, whose versified attack on physiognomy we have just quoted, has shown his just appreciation of beauty of person as associated with beauty of mind, and has on all occasions connected certain internal qualities with certain exterior marks in the persons of his heroes and his heroines. The veiled Prophet of Khorassan has a visage in keeping with his hideous soul, and the light of the haram, the young Nourmahal, is blessed with a set of features and a figure that are worthy of an angel.

"While her laugh, full of life, without any controul,
But the sweet one of gracefulness, rung from her soul;
And where it most sparkled no glance could discover,
In lip, cheek, or eyes, for it brightened all over,—
Like any fair lake that the breeze is upon
When it breaks into dimples and laughs in the sun!"

For this exquisite description the poet may be forgiven the obnoxious passage about physiognomy. It would redeem a darker sin. If any man were to find a face like that of Nourmahal's concealing a cold and diabolical character, he might have some shadow of a reason to deny that there is a correspondence between the features and the soul, though even in such a case the shock that the discovery would occasion would be a sufficient

proof that anomalies of this nature are extremely rare and strikingly at variance with our general experience. Lavater lays great stress on the very unequivocal and decisive character of a laugh. If it be free and hearty, and occasion a general and light movement in all the features, and dimple the cheek and chin, it is an almost infallible evidence of the absence of any great natural wickedness of disposition. In judging of the character from the countenance, it is of great importance to observe which emotions are most happily expressed. The frequency of a smile is not so true a sign of gentleness and good humour as its facility.

In considering the truth or falsehood of the general proposition that the body corresponds with the soul, we may fairly illustrate it by extreme cases. No man for instance connects in his own mind corporeal deformity with a perfect beauty of soul. As we cannot conceive pure unembodied spirit, we give it a fleshly but most glorious external. An angel with a low monkey forehead and a flat or a pug nose, is a contradiction which neither reason nor fancy can wholly reconcile. We derive this impression of the fitness of things from Nature herself, who reveals the harmony of the mysterious system which connects the flesh and the spirit of all mortal beings. Occasional and slight deviations from the general rule do not shake the faith of philosophic minds. Even admitting (but only, however, for the sake of the argument) that some of the most amiable and intellectual men have had the faces of villains and of idiots; what does it prove? Such exceptions are not more remarkable than the occasional monstrous births of men and brutes. Because some individuals have been born with two heads or a hairy hide, it is not the less a law of nature that mankind have only one head a piece, and smooth uncovered skins.

The majestic external conformation of the greatest poets and philosophers, both of ancient and modern times, is a strong evidence in favour of physiognomy. The heads of these men are

all more or less indicative of their mental character. Montaigne indeed laments the ugliness of Socrates, and repeats the well known anecdote of the physiognomical judgment passed on him by Zopyrus, that he was "stupid, brutal, sensual and addicted to drunkenness." With respect to the original *moral* qualities of the philosopher, the decision was not erroneous; for Socrates himself admitted that his virtues were a hard-gained triumph over his natural disposition. But the philosopher's forehead was a fitting tabernacle for a lofty mind. No craniologist would have doubted his intellectual power. The skill of Zopyrus was confined to the perusal of the lower features.

How delightful is the study of the human head! It is a mystery and a glory! It at once perplexes the reason and kindles the imagination! What a wondrous treasury of knowledge—what a vast world of thought is contained within its ivory walls! In that small citadel of the soul what a host of mighty and immortal images are ranged uncrowded! What floods of external light and what an endless variety of sounds are admitted to the busy world within, through those small but beautiful apertures, the eye and the ear! Those delicately penciled arches that hang their lines of loveliness above the mental heaven, are more full of grace and glory than the rainbow! Those blue windows of the mind expose a sight more lovely and profound than the azure depths of the sea or sky! Those rosy portals that give entrance to the invisible Spirit of Life, and whence issue those "winged words" that steal into the lover's heart or the sage's mind, or fly to the uttermost corners of the earth and live for ever, surpass in beauty the orient cloud-gates of the dawn! To trace in such exquisite outworks the state of the interior is an occupation almost worthy of a God!

THE FATE OF THE BRAVE.

I.

The Hero conquers pain and death
Who proudly yields a transient breath
For immortality;
A dark oblivion doth not fall
Around him, like a funeral pall,
As when the dull herd die!

II.

But oft his glory forms the light
That never dies of visions bright
That gifted bards inflame;—
And ever like a guiding star
It gilds the rough red seas of war,
And shows the path to fame.

III.

Though pale and tremulous lips may swear
That life is sweet and fame is air,
The taunt ne'er stirs the brave;
For oh! how pitiful and brief
The life that like a scentless leaf
Can charm not from the grave.

IV.

The purest spirits of the sky
May still revert with partial eye
To all they loved below,
And, while their honored offspring share
The lustre of the name they bear,
With tender transport glow.

V.

Oh! who then would not dare the death
That heroes die, and seize the wreath
No mortal blast may blight?
The general doom that mocks his kind
He half defies who leaves behind
A trail of living light!

A DULL CALM.

The moon is high,
But still her beam
Is pale, and partly shrouded;—
Unmoving vapours stain the sky,—
The slumbering lake is clouded,
Yet looks so calm 'tis hard to deem
The tempest e'er hath ploughed it!

The groves are hushed,—
And not a breath
Disturbs their coverts green,—
No boughs by fluttering wings are brushed,
Still hang the dew-drops sheen;—
'Tis like the fearful reign of death—
A solemn trance serene!

It is an hour
That well might fill
The lightest heart with sadness;—
The silent gloom around hath power
To banish aught of gladness—
The good with awful dreams to thrill—
The guilty—drive to madness!

FAME AND LOVE.

I.

I SOUGHT the halls of Fame,
And raised a suppliant voice,
But not one sound responsive breathed my name,
Or bade my soul rejoice!

II.

In comfortless despair
To find ambition vain,
I leave forlorn the paths of public care,
And this low cot regain.

III.

As some remembered scene
That charmed in sun-lit hours,
Grows drear and dull when tempests intervene
With wintry shades and showers;

IV.

So every form of earth
Obeys a mental change,
And things that kindle in the light of mirth,
In grief, are cold and strange.

V.

Thus wrapt in cheerless gloom,
My home is home no more,
The place looks lone, the plants less sweetly bloom,
And charm not as before.

How dark the threshold seems,
How dim the casement flowers,
How sickly pale the star-like blossom gleams
O'er these still jasmine bowers!

VII.

A dread foreboding falls
Ice-cold upon my heart,—
Perhaps within these dear domestic walls
Hath fierce Death hurled his dart!

VIII.

But hark! yon lattice shakes!
A female hand appears,
And, lo! the face whose smile of welcome makes
Mine eyes forget their tears!

The roof with gladness rings—
And quick feet tread the floor—
With joyous shout a rosy cherub flings
Wide back my cottage door!

X.

And oh, how different now
The thoughts that thrill my frame!
I kiss with proud delight each dear one's brow,
And dream no more of fame.

ON EGOTISM.

Egotism is not always connected with pure selfishness, or an arrogant over-estimate of our own merit in opposition to the claims of others. Self-love is not essentially exclusive. A man may have a very high regard for himself, without having less for others. The vain are often warm-hearted. What is called egotism is sometimes nothing more than that almost unconscious overflow of mingled cordiality and self-content which are remarkable in men of great fervour and vivacity of feeling. When people are in good humour with themselves they are generally disposed to be well satisfied with others, and in that open confidence in which even reserved men will occasionally indulge in moments of hilarity and cheerfulness, egotism is the reverse of all that is exclusive or unsocial. The French are great egotists, but they are at the same time the most agreeable, the most polite and the most considerate people in the world. If they do not conceal their talents under a veil of false humility, they at all events contrive that their own pretensions shall not materially interfere with the comfort and self-complacency of their associates. They do not seek to elevate themselves at the expense of others.

Egotism is especially offensive to egotists. We always hate to see our own faults in other men. The really selfish man is not always he who talks most about himself, for reserve under the mask of modesty often conceals a heartless exclusiveness that is utterly unknown to the garrulous and self-laudatory. We usually judge of our fellow-creatures by ourselves, and as an egotist of the worst species is impatient of the claims of others, he naturally

preserves a cautious silence, as he does not expect that sympathy from his companions which they never obtain from him. He thinks that all men will view his pretensions with the same invidious eye with which he looks on theirs. The frank and candid egotist, on the other hand, who

————" pours out all as plain
As downright Shippen or as old Montaigne,"

not having experienced any uneasy sensation at the pretensions of others, anticipates no want of a generous reciprocity of feeling towards himself. The silent egotist is a far less amiable character than the talkative one. The one is cold, intolerant and splenetic; the other frank, cordial and confiding. Women are undoubtedly greater egotists than men, and yet they are far more social and less selfish. They will run on for ever about their own children or relatives or their own domestic affairs, but then they are equally ready to attend to the concerns of others. They never dream of giving offence by making their own little interests the topics of conversation, because they do not grow impatient when it is their turn to listen. That women are not egotists in the worst sense of the term, is clear from the generous devotion with which they will undergo any pain, or trouble or fatigue for those whom they love, or even for strangers who may stand in need of their sympathy and assistance.

It is a sad affectation to pretend an utter indifference to one's own fame, or to speak with extreme disparagement of one's own powers. Mock-modesty is more disgusting than extravagant self-praise, because the last is at least sincere, while the first is hypocritical. The one is a mere weakness, the other borders upon crime, as all deceit and falsehood must do. Self-love is so much a law of our nature that it is idle to affect a superiority to it. A man might as well attempt to persuade us that he deliberately prefers pain to pleasure, as that he has no partiality to himself.

Without this feeling he can scarcely have a sense of his own identity. It is only in modern times, and in very courtly and insincere societies, that men have found it necessary to conceal their self-approbation. The ancients publicly applauded their own actions and boasted of their fame, and savages, who have not learned to conceal their nature, record their own personal exploits in the presence of their assembled countrymen. "If you desire glory," says Epicurus, writing to a friend, "nothing can bestow it more than the letters which I write to you;" and Seneca, observes D'Israeli, in quoting these words, adds, "what Epicurus promised to his friend, that, my Lucilius, I promise to you." Lucan has not hesitated to speak of his own immortality. In the following passage from the ninth book of the *Pharsalia* (as translated by Rowe) he thus proudly asserts his own merits.

Nor Cæsar thou disdain, that I rehearse
Thee and thy wars in no ignoble verse;
Since if in aught the Latian muse excel,
My name and thine immortal I foretel;
Eternity our labours shall reward,
And Lucan flourish, like the Grecian bard;
My numbers shall to latest times convey
The tyrant Cæsar, and Pharsalia's day.

Ovid, in his Metamorphoses, has expressed a similar sentiment with equal boldness.

"Come, soon or late, death's undetermined day,
This mortal being only can decay;
My nobler part, my fame, shall reach the skies,
And to late times with blooming honors rise;
Whate'er the unbounded Roman power obeys,
All climes and nations shall record my praise:
If 'tis allowed to poets to divine,
One half of round eternity is mine."

Perhaps if men could really know themselves, and only take credit for their actual merits, the world would be less impatient of their self-laudations. What raises our indignation is the feel-

ing that their claims exceed their deserts, or that the latter are at least doubtful and require confirmation. Nobody is offended at the self-consciousness of indisputable genius, when it does not exceed the limits of strict truth and justice. When a man speaks correctly, and with a modest pride of his own capacity, no one has either a right or an inclination to complain. There is a natural sense of justice in the human mind. A real claim is always willingly conceded as soon as it is fairly proved. It is only when, like the fly upon the chariot-wheel, some insignificant human insect imagines he raises all the dust and turmoil of the world, that we feel disposed to be angry at his folly and presumption. We are not so much vexed at a man's turning his own trumpeter, as at his giving himself titles which are not his due.

It occasionally happens that what we take for an overweening self-conceit is quite the reverse. A man will sometimes talk of his talents and acquirements from a painful mistrust, both of his own judgment and of the feelings of others. He craves their sympathy and support. In the same way individuals of a certain fixed rank in society never trouble themselves about it, while those whose station is more equivocal are for ever talking of their rights of precedency and distinction. Noblemen think and speak less of their titles than tradesmen of their gentility. A man of mere wealth is jealous of hereditary rank or the claims of genius, and when he rings his purse in our ears it is only to conceal his real uneasiness with respect to the doubtful nature of his position.

The most offensive kind of egotism is, "the pride that apes humility." There are authors and eminent men who mince their greatness, and make themselves small in company, from a dread of exciting too much envy, or of throwing all their associates into a disheartening shade. They talk on trifling matters only, and with an affectation of simplicity, as men, let themselves down to children. They will not "turn their silver lining" on the

sight of their ordinary acquaintance. They wish not to dazzle their admirers with excess of brightness. They check the expression of their sublimer thoughts, and look mild and gracious. They are modest in their triumphs.

"And of their port as meek as is a maid."

Such proud condescension is insufferably disgusting, and is sufficient to irritate a saint. It cannot be denied that there is a slight touch of this species of egotism in Addison's *Spectator*. His affectation of lowering himself to the understanding of the ladies is a very bad compliment to his fair readers, and not very creditable to himself. Allowances, however, must be made for the low standard of female accomplishments at the period at which he wrote; and we must also admit that the extreme elegance, the benevolent feeling, and the vein of quiet humour which characterize his essays make us disposed to forget a little too much self-complacency and pretension. But still Addison was not altogether an amiable egotist. He was too apt to give his little senate laws, and to look askance at the best efforts of his rivals. His celebrated quarrel with Pope and the latter's exquisite satire upon the occasion, have placed the ungenerous nature of his egotism in a light as strong as it is unfavourable. Pope was no less an egotist than Addison, but his egotism took a more generous turn. Addison's authorial egotism, however, was not generally offensive, for he had too nice a sense of his own reputation and influence as a writer to betray any unworthy jealousies to the public. It was in private life, that his uneasy reserve, his impatience of equality, and his love of small flatterers and sycophants, gave so much real cause of regret to the better order of his admirers.

"It is a hard and nice subject," says Cowley, "for a man to speak of himself; it grates his own heart to say any thing of disparagement, and the reader's ears to hear any praise from him." Cowley, however, was himself an egotist, and ventured

to grapple with the difficulty of which he speaks. There is no doubt that self is a very delicate and dangerous theme, not exactly because a man cannot say any thing in his own praise without presumption, but because the subject is so delightful to himself, and at the same time so rife with delusion, that he is apt to be carried away by his enthusiasm into an extravagant and absurd over-estimate of his own merits. If we are candid in our egotism, and exult only in the right place, and do not weary the reader or the hearer with a too elaborate detail, we may not only escape the giving actual offence, but excite a sympathy in our favour. The personal feelings and peculiarities of real genius are always interesting to the public, and it is difficult to conceive any species of writing more pleasant than a great man's autobiography. There is no page of Hume's History of England that we read with deeper interest than the brief but beautiful life by which it is preceded. It is a model of graceful self-history. Sir Walter Scott was also a most agreeable egotist. His little personal allusions and reminiscences are almost as precious as his inimitable fictions. The reason why the egotism of some writers is unpleasing, is not that they talk too much, but too extravagantly, of their own powers, and too contemptuously of their opponents. When a man ventures to estimate his own genius he cannot be too cautious of taking more than he deserves, or of doing injustice to others. In either case he commits an error peculiarly offensive to the rest of mankind.

It has been made a question whether true genius is conscious of its powers, but I think there can be little doubt upon the subject. It is certain that both Milton and Shakespeare were fully aware of the greatness of their endowments, though a modern Essayist has maintained that the ease with which the latter produced his works is an argument against his possession of any great self-satisfaction on their account. I do not think so. Both the author and the artist have a proud consciousness of

their power when they dash off some wondrous work with a masterly hand, and with the rapidity and happiness of inspiration. They are often perhaps as much struck with the beauty of their own creations as the admiring world is. Shakspeare's Sonnets, which by their personal traits have so delighted the two Schlegels, who are puzzled to account for the neglect with which they have been treated by the poet's own countrymen, abound in illustrations of that proud and lofty confidence with which the writer anticipated his immortality. The following noble sonnet will afford a specimen of the style in which this great man dared to speak of his own fame:

> "*Not marble, nor the gilded monuments*
> *Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhime;*
> But you shall shine more bright in these contents
> Thou unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
> When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
> And broils root out the work of masonry,
> Nor Marsis' sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn
> The living record of your memory.
> 'Gainst death and all oblivious enmity
> Shall you pace forth; *your praise shall still find room,*
> *E'en in the eyes of all posterity*
> *That wear this world out to the ending doom.*
> So till the judgment that yourself arise
> You live in this, and dwell in lover's eyes."

Milton's glorious egotism is almost as conspicuous as his genius. He felt that he had produced a work which "the world would not willingly let die*." Dr. Johnson has touchingly remarked, that "fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked its reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterranean cur-

* In the "Paradise Lost"—indeed in every one of his poems—it is Milton himself whom you see; his Satan, his Adam, his Raphael, almost his Eve—are all John Milton; and it is a sense of this intense egotism that gives me the greatest pleasure in reading Milton's works. The egotism of such a man is a revelation of spirit.—*Coleridge's Table Talk.*

rent through fear and silence." "I cannot," he continues, "but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting without impatience the vicissitudes of opinion and the impartiality of a future generation." There can be little doubt that he was supported by this "sober certainty" of future fame. Milton was not the man to be easily disheartened, even though he had fallen on evil days, and was "with dangers and afflictions compassed round." The fortitude of Milton was sublime. Let him speak for himself, in his own noble and immortal numbers.

"CYRIACK, this three year's day these eyes, though clear
To outward view of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot:
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun or moon or star, throughout the year,
Or man or woman. *Yet I argue not*
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In liberty's defence, *my noble task*
Of which all Europe rings from side to side:
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask,
Content though blind, had I no better guide."

There is something particularly impressive and affecting in the fact, that with the dignity of a prophet Milton always prepared himself for any great intellectual task by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit

"Who touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire."

He reminds us of that period alluded to by Cowper, when

————————"The sacred name
Of Poet and of Prophet was the same."

In one of his prose works, Milton has the following reference to his poetical powers.

"*These abilities,* wheresoever they be found, *are the inspired gift of God rarely bestowed,* but yet to some, though most abuse, in every nation; and are of power,—to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue, and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; *to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness,*" &c.

When I once enter upon these quotations it is difficult to know where to stop; and though it is somewhat apart from the main purpose of this essay, I cannot resist the temptation of adding the following exquisite sentence, in which Milton alludes to his unwilling entrance upon bitter controversies. His prose is as poetical and vigorous as his verse:

"I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these" (alluding to his poetical schemes), "and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, put from beholding *the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies.*"

Such a writer as Milton might well essay the height of some great argument,

"Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,"

and demand the respect and gratitude of mankind. He could hardly form too high an estimate of his powers. An affectation of modesty in a writer of such vast intellect would be almost as ridiculous as the presumption of a poetaster. A powerful man is necessarily conscious of his strength, unless he is sunk in an eternal lethargy or slumber. To suppose a strong mind utterly unconscious of the force which it exerts is as absurd as to suppose a similar unconsciousness in the case of physical energy.

The sin of egotism is more frequently laid to the charge of literary men than any other class of people, but perhaps with little reason. There is not much difference between egotism in print and egotism in conversation. Nor is it more surprising that authors should interest themselves in the merits and fortunes

of the offspring of their brain than that parents should cherish a blind partiality for their children. The affection seems natural and instinctive in either case.

If authors (like other men) are egotists, they are not to be too indiscriminately condemned on that account. There is a great variety of egotism, and only that kind is disgusting or ridiculous which is either unsupported by correspondent excellence, or is connected with selfishness, envy and detraction. Chaucer, the venerable father of English poetry, in his "*Testament of Love*," a work which chiefly consists of a dialogue between a prisoner* (Chaucer himself) and Love, does not hesitate to do full justice to his own merits. He makes *Love thus speak of him* :—

"Myne owne true servaunte, the noble philosophicall poete in Englishe (whiche evermore hyme busieth and travaileth right sore my name to increse; wherefore all that willen me gode, owe to do him worship and reverence both; truly his better ne his pere in schole of my rules could I never finde)—He quod she, in a tretise that he made of my servaunte Troilus, hath this matter touched, and at the full this question assoiled†. Certainly his noble sayings can I not emend: in godeness of gentil manlich speech without any maner of nicitie of storieres imaginacion, in wit, and in gode reason of sentence‡, he passeth al other makers§."

Dryden confesses his own self-esteem, and after observing that he has "grown old in seeking so barren a reward as fame," he adds :—"The same parts and application which have made me a poet, might have raised me to the highest honours of the gown." To whom is such a truth as this offensive? When some one congratulated him on the merit of his celebrated *Ode*, "You are right," he replied; a "nobler ode was never produced, and never will be." Self-confidence, as Johnson justly observes, is the first requisite to great undertakings. It was the felicity of Pope, says the same writer,

* A reference to his own condition as a prisoner in the Tower, where he was confined, it is believed, for two or three years for a political offence.

† Solved. ‡ Judgment. § Poets.

to rate himself at his real value. Pope was not, however, always a candid egotist, but would endeavour to escape from the imputation of vanity by some miserable subterfuge, such as affecting an indifference to poetical reputation, though he was beyond all doubt "a fool to fame" from his early childhood to the latest hour of his life. He would sometimes also pretend an indifference to criticism, an affectation which his actions so glaringly contradicted that a child could have seen his insincerity. If Pope had been interdicted the use of the press, and prevented from reading his productions to his friends, he would have written fewer verses. His public egotism forms the most delightful feature in his writings. He is singularly happy in his allusions to himself and his own friends. Lord Bacon was an egotist of the boldest order, and never doubted his immortality for a moment. Buffon said that of the great geniuses of modern times there were but five, "Newton, Bacon, Leibnitz, Montesquieu, and *himself*." "When I am dead you will not easily meet with another John Hunter," said that celebrated anatomist to his friends. These instances are alluded to by D'Israeli, who quotes also the bold avowal of Kepler:—"I dare insult mankind by confessing that I am he who has turned science to advantage. If I am pardoned, I shall rejoice; if blamed, I shall endure it. The die is cast; I have written this book, and whether it be read by posterity or by my contemporaries, is of no consequence; it may well wait for a reader during one century, when God himself during six thousand years has waited for an observer like myself." We learn from Burney's History of Music that the fiddler Veracini said with impious arrogance, that there was but one God and one Veracini. Shenstone has recorded his thoughts and feelings, and frankly entitled them "*Egotisms*, from my own sensations." Walter Savage Landor has promised the public an historical work, and is persuaded, he says, that he will not be "confounded by posterity with the Coxes and Foxes of the age."

Rousseau was a daring and yet a delightful egotist. His passionate eloquence hurries us along with such breathless rapidity over his burning pages, that we have no time to dwell upon his faults. Montaigne is one of the happiest writers on the delicate theme of self that we are yet acquainted with. Addison quotes the caustic attack of the younger Scaliger on the lively old Gascon. "For my part," says Montaigne, "I am a great lover of your white wines." "What in the world signifies it to the public," says Scaliger, "whether he was a lover of white wines or red?" Addison, who owed something to the father of modern Essayists, ought not to have quoted this taunt without softening it down with a kind word or two of explanation or defence. If Montaigne had talked about nothing but his taste in wine, and entered into disquisitions on such trivial matters only, he would long ago have been forgotten. Montaigne talks on to the public with the same unaffected ease as he would have conversed with his most familiar friends, and the great charm of his essays is their free and unaffected alternation

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

Addison is rather hard in one of his papers on the whole tribe of egotists, forgetting the egotistical character of all Essayists and his own individual foibles. His indiscriminate censure of egotism is inconsistent with his often quoted remarks in the first number of the *Spectator*, in which he explains how much more we are interested in a work when we know something of the author. "I have observed," says he, "that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure, till he knows whether the writer of it be a black man or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married or a bachelor, with other particulars of a like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author."

It is certain that if Montaigne had written less about himself, he would have been less amusing and instructive. He was

a great talker, as well as a free and social writer, so that his egotism was the result of a general spirit of communicativeness. Other writers have been induced to pour forth their secrets into the public ear from the difficulty of finding some congenial private listener, from some defect of speech, or from a want of nerve or confidence in society. Addison, from whatever cause, was silent in company, and it must have been delightful to him to relieve his breast of the weight of suppressed thought in his elegant yet familiar essays. "Since," says he, in the first number of the *Spectator*, "I have neither time nor inclination to communicate the fulness of my heart in speech, I am resolved to do it in writing, and to print myself out, if possible, before I die." We doubtless owe many of Cowper's poems to a similar feeling. The less that sensitive egotist was able to communicate himself to his own private circle, the more garrulous he became in public. When his tongue failed him, he flew to his pen. The fire and point of his published satires, and the egotism of much of his poetry, were partly the result of a mere re-action of feeling after his painful timidity and forced reserve in private. He has given us a little revelation from his own heart in his poem on Conversation.

"The cause perhaps inquiry may descry
Self-searching with an introverted eye,
Concealed within an unsuspected part,
The vainest corner of our own vain heart;
For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
Our self-importance ruins its own scheme.
In other eyes our talents rarely shown,
Become at length so splendid in our own
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due."

Pope is said to have been restrained in conversation from a dread of the man saying something unworthy of the poet. No apprehension of this nature seems to have checked the volubility of Cole-

ridge, who loved to hear the sound of his own voice. He, however, required undivided and most respectful attention in his audience, or his self-complacency was disturbed. He was satisfied with nothing short of an entire monopoly of speech. The slightest interruption brought him to a dead stop. He was rather a lecturer than a talker. He was a lay-preacher. He had no idea of dialogue. Dr. Johnson, though more dogmatical, was more magnanimous; and though he triumphed over his opponents in a very summary way, the collision of different opinions, instead of making him silent, sullen and disdainful, struck out the finest scintillations from his own mind. Coleridge was an egotist both as a man and as an author. His Biographia Literaria is intensely personal. One of the most daring egotists of modern times is William Cobbett. His self-praise and self-assurance are sometimes carried to such a length that we almost doubt if he is serious. It looks like caricature, a wild quiz, or a wicked invention of the enemy. Yet his manner is so open, hearty and unaffected, that the most fastidious reader is rather amused than offended. When compared with the sneaking, shuffling and under-hand tricks of more cautious writers, who would play the same game if they had but the same courage, its effect is "quite refreshing." Byron was such an egotist that all his poetical heroes were mere personifications of himself. An intense egotism is inconsistent with the dramatic faculty. In his Childe Harold he speaks of his future fame,

> ———"I twine
> My hopes of being remembered in my line
> With my land's language."

Wordsworth's poems are "moods of his own mind." In one of his prefaces he does not hesitate to express his contempt for the critics, and his consciousness of his own powers.

"If," says he, "bearing in mind the many poets distinguished by this prime faculty" (the imagination) "whose names I omit to mention, yet justified by a recollection of the insults which the ignorant, the incapa-

ble and the presumptuous have heaped upon my writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself, *I shall declare* (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of man, his natural affections and his acquired passions, which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance."

Hazlitt is an egotistical writer, and is never afraid to praise his own writings, though he does not say more of them than they actually deserve. The following passage seems to have been wrung from him by the attacks of *Blackwood* and the *Quarterly* :—

"If the reader is not already apprized of it, he will please to take notice that I write this at Winterslow. My style here is apt to be redundant and excursive. At other times it may be cramped, dry, abrupt; but here it flows like a river, and overspreads its banks. I have not to seek for thoughts or hunt for images: they come of themselves, I inhale them with the breeze, and the silent groves are vocal with a thousand recollections.—

'And visions, as poetic eyes avow,
Hang on each leaf, and cling to ev'ry bough.'

"Here I came fifteen years ago, a willing exile: and as I trod the lengthened greensward by the low wood-side, repeated the old line,

'My mind to me a kingdom is!'

"I found it so then, before, and since; and shall I faint now that I have poured out the spirit of that mind to the world, and treated many subjects with truth, with freedom, and power, because I have been followed with one cry of abuse ever since *for not being a government-tool?* Here I returned a few years after to finish some works I had undertaken, doubtful of the event, but determined to do my best; and wrote that character of Milimant which was once transcribed by fingers fairer than Aurora's, but no notice was taken of it, because I was not a government-tool, and must be supposed devoid of taste and elegance by all who aspired to these qualities in their own persons. Here I sketched my account of that old honest Signior Orlando Friscobaldo, which with its fine, racy, acrid tone that old crab-apple, G*ff***d, would have relished or pretended to relish, had I been a government-tool! Here too I have written *Table-Talks* without number, and as yet without a falling off, till now that they are nearly done, or I should not make this boast. *I could swear* (were they not mine) *the thoughts in many of them are founded as a rock, free as air, the tone like an Italian picture.* What then? Had the style been like

polished steel, as firm and as bright, it would have availed me nothing, for I am not a government-tool! I had endeavoured to guide the taste of the English people to the best English writers; but I had said that English kings did not reign by right divine, and that his present majesty was descended from an elector of Hanover in a right line; and no loyal subject would after this look into Webster or Deckar, because I had pointed them out. I had done something (more than any one except Schlegel) to vindicate the *character of Shakspeare's Plays* from the stigma of French criticism; but our Antijacobin and Anti-Gallican writers soon found out that I had said and written that Frenchmen, Englishmen, men, were not slaves by birthright. This was enough to damn the work. Such has been the head and front of my offending."

"I have let this passage stand, however critical," adds the author, "because it may serve as a practical illustration of what writers think of themselves when put upon the defensive." His friend Leigh Hunt, who talks to the public as if the whole world were at his fire-side, does not speak quite so decidedly of his own talents, but he never loses an opportunity of opening out his heart. But with all his egotism, Hunt is one of the most generous and sympathizing of human beings. He affords a strong illustration of the distinction between a certain kind of egotism and mere selfishness. Poor Goldsmith was the most amusing of egotists. He could never suppress his self-conceit. He was jealous of every thing and every body that divided the attention which he expected to be lavished on himself. When some beautiful young ladies attracted the attention of the company in his presence, he sullenly hinted that there were times and places in which he too was admired. This species of egotism was truly unworthy of such a man. Richardson, the Novelist, was guilty of a weakness equally degrading to a mind like his. He would never let any visitor escape the hearing of some of his productions; and once in a large company, when a gentleman just arrived from Paris, told him that he had seen one of his novels on the French King's table, he pretended not to hear, because the rest of the company were at the moment busily engaged on other

subjects. He waited sometime for a pause, and then inquired with affected carelessness, "What, Sir, was that which you were just saying about the French King." "Oh! nothing of any consequence," replied his informant, disgusted with the trick, and resolved to punish him. No literary man exceeds Boswell in contemptible self-conceit. His failing is too well known to need an illustration. Sir Godfrey Kneller was an awful egotist. I have an indistinct recollection of some outrageous and profane boast of his, connected with his merit as a painter.

The *Critical Review* (I know not in what number nor in what year, for I take the passage from a quotation in Boswell's life of Johnson), makes the following classification of egotists:

"We may reduce the egotists to four classes. In the first we have Julius Cæsar: he relates his own transactions; but he relates them with peculiar grace and dignity, and his narrative is supported by the greatness of his character and achievements. In the *second* class we have Marcus Antoninus: this writer has given us a series of reflections on his own life; but his sentiments are so noble, his morality so sublime, that his meditations are universally admired. In the *third* class we have some others of tolerable credit, who have given importance to their own private history by an intermixture of literary anecdotes, and the occurrences of their own times; the celebrated Huetius has published an entertaining volume upon this plan, '*De Rebus ad eum pertinentibus*.' In the *fourth* class we have the journalists, temporal and spiritual: Elias Ashmole, William Silly, George Whitefield, John Wesley, and a thousand other old women and fanatic writers of memoirs and meditations."

This is a very imperfect classification, notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's approbation of it. In which class should those egotists be placed who, like Lord Byron and William Wordsworth, mould all the creations of their fancy into images of themselves?

I repeat, that all men and women are egotists in their way, and that self-praise and self-love are offensive and contemptible only when they exceed the bounds of justice, and are linked to envy, hatred and all uncharitableness. When we take vast credit to ourselves for unworthy trifles, or make ourselves ridiculous by

pretending to more virtue or genius than we possess, or allow a spirit of exclusiveness or jealousy to blind us to the merits of others, there are few qualities which are more odious than egotism*. But these offensive peculiarities are not necessarily connected with a fair and proper pride. Without a certain degree of self-confidence and self-esteem, no man can ever become eminently great or good; and it would be difficult to say why any one should be compelled, out of a deference to the mean and envious part of mankind, to assume an unconsciousness of that merit which raises him above them.

DAWN.

How fair and gay the scene appears !
The red sun cheers the rising day ;
The dewy mountain, the crystal fountain
Are glittering bright in orient light.

The lark that floats serene on high,
And fills the sky with cheerful notes,
The shepherd's singing, the light bells ringing,
In union sweet the morning greet.

Oh ! who could rove at such an hour
By shrub and flower, in mead or grove,
Without revealing responsive feeling,
While Nature's voice bids man rejoice !

* The more decorous manners of the present age have attached a disproportionate opprobrium to this foible, and many therefore abstain with cautious prudence from all displays of what they feel. Nay, some do actually flatter themselves that they abhor all egotism, and never betray it in their writings or discourse. But watch these men narrowly ; and in the greater number of cases you will find their thoughts and feelings and mode of expression saturated with the passion of contempt, which is the concentrated vinegar of egotism.—*Coleridge.*

LIFE.

I.

Alas! what mystic changes mark
Our pilgrimage below!
As fitful as the fire-fly's spark
The gleams of pleasure glow,
And leave the startled spirit dark
Beneath the night of woe!

II.

We learn not why the lustre dies,
Nor why the darkness spreads;
For oft on Penury's wintry skies
The soul its sun-light sheds;
While wreaths that Fortune's votaries prize
Are placed on aching heads.

III.

And e'en fair Virtue's holy spell
Not always here avails!
Full many a noble heart may tell
How oft her magic fails,
When throngs of restless thoughts rebel,
And hideous gloom prevails.

IV.

And what we hear, or what we see,
And what we think, or feel;
As dream-like as the clouds may be
That through the twilight steal!—
Oh, God! each mortal mystery,
Thou only canst reveal!

AN INDIAN DAY.

MORN.

Lo! Morning wakes upon the grey hill's brow,
Raising the veil of mist meek Twilight wore ;—
And hark ! from mangoe tope and tamarind bough
The glad birds' matins ring ! On Gunga's shore
Yon sable groups with ritual signs adore
The rising Lord of Day. Above the vale
Behold the tall palmyra proudly soar,
And wave his verdant wreath,—a lustre pale
Gleams on the broad-fringed leaves that rustle in the gale.

NOON.

'Tis now the Noon-tide hour. No sounds arise
To cheer the sultry calm,—deep silence reigns
Among the drooping groves ; the fervid skies
Glare on the slumbering wave ; on yon wide plains
The zephyr dies,—no hope of rest detains
The wanderer there ; the sun's meridian might
No fragrant bower, no humid cloud restrains,—
The silver rays, insufferably bright,
Play on the fevered brow, and mock the dazzled sight !

NIGHT.

The gentle Evening comes ! The gradual breeze,
The milder radiance and the longer shade,
Steal o'er the scene !—Through slowly waving trees
The pale moon smiles,—the minstrels of the glade
Hail night's fair queen ; and, as the day-beams fade
Along the crimson west, through twilight gloom
The fire-fly darts ; and where, all lowly laid,
The dead repose, the Moslem's hands illume
The consecrated lamp o'er Beauty's hallowed tomb !

MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

THE Elegiac Sonnets of Mrs. Charlotte Smith were once very popular compositions. I lately returned to them with a pleasurable feeling, for as I had not read them since my boyhood, when they seemed productions of extraordinary beauty, I was curious to discover the nature of the change that years and more extensive reading had effected in my taste. It is sufficiently remarkable how the same reader will sometimes fluctuate, at intervals, in his literary fancies; but the fickleness of the public mind is still more surprising. How many once popular writers are now despised or forgotten, while some who were formerly neglected are regarded with idolatry! With respect to the particular case of Charlotte Smith, I confess that my individual opinion has corresponded to a considerable extent with the variation of the general judgment; and the verses that seemed very exquisite poetry to my boyish taste, make a very different impression upon me now. Her poems, ran through numerous and large editions on their first appearance, and it is curious to trace, in various contemporary publications, the respect with which they were treated by some of the first critics of her time*. Cowper, who was assuredly no mean judge of poetical excellence, speaks of her "charming Sonnets†." It is true

* The Gentleman's Magazine (of that day) gravely observed, that "it is trifling praise for Mrs. Smith's Sonnets to pronounce them superior to Shakspeare's and Milton's."

† Mathias, the author of the Pursuits of Literature, thus alludes to her in one of the notes to that work:—"Mrs. Charlotte Smith has great poetical powers, and a pathos which commands attention." Sir Egerton Brydges, in the second edition of his *Censura Literaria*, speaks of her poetry in the following terms:—"There is so much unaffected elegance; so much harmony and pathos in it; the images are so soothing and so delightful; and the sentiments so touching, so consonant to the best movements of the heart, that no reader of pure taste can grow weary of perusing them." In an article on Chalmers's English Poets (apparently by Southey) in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 23, it is observed that "Charlotte Smith's descriptions, whether in prose or verse, have always the charm of well-selected truth."

that he also thought the frigid Hayley a poet, but at one period his taste would have been called in question if he had esteemed him less. The "Triumphs of Temper" did not try the temper of our ancestors, but was really, for a considerable period, a very popular performance. But Cowper himself was one of those who commenced the grand revolution in our poetical literature which brought such writers as his friends Hayley and Mrs. Smith into comparative contempt, and who first taught us by precept and example that English verse was capable of great improvement, notwithstanding what was long considered the actual perfection of Pope. I do not mean to fall into the too common injustice of those who think it necessary, when they admire the greater freedom and variety of the present systems of versification, to deny all merit to poetry of a different order. I am not exclusive in my taste, and can read alternately such poets as Coleridge and Pope with a disposition to enjoy and appreciate their very opposite and peculiar excellencies both of style and matter. The dreaminess, the profound intensity, and the subtle and mystical harmonies of the one, need not render us insensible to the terseness, the wit and energy, and the less elaborate, though more precise music of the other. The great facility with which Pope's manner was imitated by his followers was one cause of the decline of his popularity; for when it was found that every poetaster had got his tune by heart, the public grew sick of the repetition, and soon thought less respectfully of what at first was a marvel and a luxury. In this re-action of taste, the great poetical idol of his time is now as much depreciated as he was formerly over-rated; and it seems by many critics to be utterly forgotten, that Pope's chief excellence is by no means dependent on the mere sound of his couplets. His works not only teem with wit and wisdom, expressed with wonderful felicity and precision, but display some of those finer and more ethereal qualities that ought long ago to have settled the idle question of, whether he was a true poet or merely a clever writer

in verse. His Rape of the Lock, and several descriptive passages in the Windsor Forest, afford indisputable evidence that he possessed a fancy at once delicate and prolific, and that he could "look on nature with a poet's eye." If Pope had lived in later times, he would probably have been a very different kind of poet, and have attended more to the culture and development of his imagination. It was formerly the fashion to regard poets as mere "men of wit about town," but they are now expected to be at once fanciful and profound. People at last begin to make a distinction between verse and poetry, and cleverness and genius. Mere talent in a poem is no longer respected as it used to be, for there is now a general love of poetry for its own sake, and readers look less for smart and pointed passages of shrewd sense and satire, than for thoughts and words steeped in the hues of imagination. The consequence is that a much higher and more ethereal tone pervades the poetry of the day; and readers, accustomed to strains of loftier mood, turn with something like disgust from the verses that charmed them in their earlier years. The old common-places of poetry no longer deceive us, and the artificial expressions in which many writers of mere verse once enveloped their sickly sentimentalities, and thus passed upon the world for poets, are now utterly discarded; and if an author's style be not fresh and natural, he is not endured. Even Pope himself indulged too much in the use of epithets that were nothing more than sounding expletives, that became the more disgusting from their eternal repetition by his servile herd of imitators.

The lady, to whose Sonnets I must now return, deals very liberally in the old fashioned diction, and in that querulous egotism and fantastic melancholy which were common to all her contemporary Sonneteers. According to their notions, to be truly poetical it was necessary to be sad, and the whole world was to be informed of their affliction. Anna Seward is severely witty on Mrs. Smith's Sonnets. "Never," she says, "were poetical whipt syllabubs in

black glasses so eagerly swallowed by the odd taste of the public." But Mrs. Smith was not, like too many of her contemporaries, a tuneful hypocrite; for she really was acquainted with grief, and had no little cause for those "melodious tears," with which she gave herself to fame. She suffered severely from the failure of her husband's mercantile speculations, and the brutality and fraud of lawyers and guardians, who cheated her of a provision for her large family. Her domestic sorrows are very touchingly told in the prefaces to the different editions of her poems. Aware, therefore, that her melancholy is no poetic fiction, though often rather affectedly expressed, we can read her Sonnets without that sickening sensation which is excited by the false and ridiculous sensibilities of the Della Cruscan School. These little poems are not constructed on the Petrarchan model, and have no right to the title of sonnets, unless every poem in fourteen lines may be said to belong to that species of composition. But fourteen lines or three quatrains, and a concluding couplet, do not make a sonnet, if Petrarch and Dante in the Italian, and Milton and Wordsworth in our own language, are to be taken as authorities. In the metrical construction, and in the unity of design peculiar to the sonnet, these little compositions are all deficient. But if they are not legitimate Sonnets, several of them are very pretty and pleasing poems; for, though I once thought far more highly of them than I now do, I can still see something in them to admire. They have a feminine pathos, and a delicacy and tenderness of sentiment, that ought to save them from oblivion. Though the liquid smoothness of the versification, and the languid elegance of the diction may not suit an ear accustomed to the vigour and variety of later poems, I can remember that they gratified me in my younger days, and they have still a kind of charm for me that I am almost ashamed to acknowledge. Perhaps early associations, a reference to the feminine qualities of the fair author's mind, and a sympathy for her distresses, make me willing to be pleased in

defiance of an increased experience and a maturer judgment. I have no doubt that it was a perusal of these Sonnets, (for such, as a matter of courtesy or convenience, they must be called,) that suggested those of Bowles, which are written in a similar strain of feeling, and perhaps with no great superiority in point of strength and originality. The versification, however, is rather more varied, and the metrical arrangement is, in some respects, a little closer to the Italian model. They have met with much the same fate. They as speedily ran through a number of editions, and were almost as speedily neglected. A great poet too, the author of Christabel, with whose own style they are so strikingly contrasted, has praised them with the same enthusiasm as did Cowper those of Charlotte Smith. Little dependence, it seems, is to be placed on the individual judgments of poets upon each other, whether favorable or adverse. Waller saw nothing in Milton, but an old blind school-master, who had written a dull poem remarkable for nothing but its length. Wordsworth and Coleridge think Gray's Elegy in a Country Church-yard a very meagre and common-place production; and Byron insinuated that Pope was a greater poet than Shakspeare, and spoke very contemptuously of Spenser. When doctors disagree, the general voice must decide upon disputed points, though even then we have no final judgment, for the public is often as fickle as a child. This is very perplexing to the poet, whose life is one dream of ambition. His only consolation is the hope that posterity will be more calm and constant; and that, when the varying winds of contemporary opinion shall have died away, his bark may float securely upon the smooth waters of immortality. It is melancholy, however, to reflect how many who have once enjoyed a flattering popularity, and who have looked forward with a proud confidence to such a consummation, have passed from the memories of men like summer clouds. Charlotte Smith, elegant and refined as she is, is rapidly sinking into oblivion, and in a very few years will be

utterly forgotten. In the meantime, as I have just spent a pleasant half-hour over her little volume, let me show my gratitude to her gentle spirit, by such praises as I can conscientiously award her, and refresh the memory of my readers with a few favourable extracts.

The following little poem, on seeing some children at play, has been quoted both by Bowles and Leigh Hunt, (poets of very different tastes and habits,) with considerable praise:

"Sighing I see yon little troop at play,
By sorrow yet untouched, unhurt by care;
While free and sportive they enjoy to-day,
Content and careless of to-morrow's fare.
O happy age! when hope's unclouded ray
Lights their green path, and prompts their simple mirth,
Ere yet they feel the thorns that lurking lay*
To wound the wretched pilgrims of the earth,
Making them rue the hour that gave them birth,
And threw them on a world so full of pain.
Where prosperous folly treads on patient worth,
And to deaf pride, misfortune pleads in vain!
Ah!—for their future fate how many fears
Oppress my heart and fill mine eyes with tears."

Mrs. Smith's knowledge of Botany, to which science, by the way, she has addressed a sonnet, is displayed in a very pleasing manner in several of her poems; and she rarely speaks of flowers without a minute fidelity of description, and the use of very graphic epithets. The following couplet is a specimen of the curious felicity of her botanical allusions.

"From the *mapped* lichen to the *plumed* weed;
From *thready* mosses to the *veinéd* flower."

* This is a sad sacrifice of grammar to rhyme. Byron has made a similar one in his fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*:—

"And dashest him again to earth; there let him *lay*."

The "Sonnet written at the close of Spring" offers further illustrations of this peculiar character of her verse.

"The garlands fade that Spring so lately wove,
Each simple flower, which she had nurs'd in dew,
Anemonies, that spangled every grove,
The primrose wan, and harebell mildly blue.
No more shall violets linger in the dell,
Or purple orchis variegate the plain,
Till Spring again shall call forth every bell,
And dress with humid hands her wreaths again.
Ah, poor humanity, so frail, so fair,
Are the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant passion and corrosive care,
Bid all thy fairy colours fade away!
Another May new buds and flowers shall bring;
Ah! why has happiness—no second Spring?"

Mrs. Smith's study of flowers led her much into the open fields, and she has shown herself to be a very minute and delicate observer of external nature. The following brief passage taken from one of her sonnets is picturesque.

"And sometimes when *the sun with parting rays*
Gilds the long grass that hides my silent bed,
A tear shall tremble in my Charlotte's eyes."

It reminds me of a beautiful touch of Coleridge's pencil in the annexed lines.

"But the dell,
Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
When through its half-transparent stalks at even,
The level sunshine glimmers with green light."

There is an expression in the following line, which has been borrowed by a living poet.

"The night-flood *rakes* upon the stony shore."

Bowles, in describing a night-scene (in his Grave of the last Saxon), says:

——"All is silent, save the tide that *rakes*
At times the beach."

Or perhaps it was taken from Hurdis:—

"*Raking* with harsh recoil the pebbly steep."

The following from an address to the North Star has rather more vigour than Mrs. Smith usually displays:

"Now nightly wandering 'mid the tempests drear
That howl the woods and rocky steeps among,
I love to see thy sudden light appear
Through the swift clouds—driven by the wind along;
Or in the turbid water, rude and dark,
O'er whose wild stream the gust of Winter raves,
Thy trembling light with pleasure still I mark,
Gleam in faint radiance on the foaming waves!"

The following verse is tender and melodious:—

"Oh! my lost love! no tomb is placed for thee
That may to stranger's eyes thy worth impart;
Thou hast no grave but in the stormy sea,
And no memorial but this breaking heart!"

I quote a part of the Sonnet to Fancy, for the sake of the neat turn of its concluding couplet:—

"Through thy false medium then no longer viewed,
May fancied pain and fancied pleasure fly;
And I, as from me all thy dreams depart,
Be to my wayward destiny subdued;
Nor seek perfection with a poet's eye,
Nor suffer anguish with a poet's heart."

It may perhaps appear from these extracts, that though not to be placed in the first class of British Female Poets, Mrs. Smith

deserves more attention from the public than she is now likely to obtain. She is not to be compared to the Lady Minstrels of the present day, (to the powerful Joanna Baillie, the fanciful L. E. L., the tender and pathetic Caroline Bowles*, or the refined and spirited Hemans,) but her poems may, nevertheless, be occasionally referred to with pleasure as the effusions of a chaste and cultivated mind.

EVENING CLOUDS.

[A FRAGMENT.]

A GLORIOUS sight ! The sun is in the sea,
But o'er its liquid cell yon cloud-arch gleams
With lambent fire—fit bridge for forms of air !
On either side, like green paths dropped with gold,
Or cowslip-covered fields in dewy light,
The glittering vapours lie.—But ah ! how vain
To breathe this feeble language o'er a scene,
So like a gorgeous vision ! Every tint
And shadowy form that charms the poet's eye
Now mocks his failing art !

* Now Mrs. Southey.

RETROSPECTIONS.

[WRITTEN IN INDIA.]

I.

'Tis sweet on this far strand,
When memory charms the fond reverted eye,
To view that hallowed land
Where early dreams like sun-touched shadows lie!

II.

The dear familiar forms,
That caught the fairest hues of happier hours,
Flash forth through after storms,
As bursts of light between autumnal showers.

III.

The green-wood's loveliest spot—
The summer walk—the cheerful winter fire—
The calm domestic cot—
The village church with ivy-covered spire—

IV.

Each scene we loved so well—
With faithful force the mind's true mirror shows;
As Painting's mighty spell
Recals the past, and lengthened life bestows.

V.

But though so brightly beam,
These distant views, they make the present drear;
By Youth's departed dream,
Life's onward paths but desolate appear.

VI.

We may not therefore dwell
Too long and deeply on the dearer past,
Nor sound, for aye, the knell
Of pleasures gone and glories overcast.

VII.

Whate'er our lot may be,
Whatever tints life's varied prospects wear,
The temper'd breast is free
From sullen apathy or fierce despair.

VIII.

In fortune's cloudiest hours,
Within the dreariest regions of the earth,
Are found both beams and flowers,
Unless the wanderer's soul betrays a dearth.

IX.

For still, where'er we range,
Are traced the sweet results of virtue's reign ;
Though forms and features change,
Fair thoughts and fine humanities remain.

X.

And he, whose spirit glows
At Nature's charms, shall own in every land
Her glorious aspect shows
The same bright marks of God's creating hand !

SONNET—TO ENGLAND.

FAIR England ! thine untravell'd sons may bear
A tranquil sense of thy surpassing worth,
As those who ne'er have parted from their birth
In faith serene their social comforts share ;
But he, alone, doth feel how deeply dear
The charms of home, who wildly wandering forth
To distant realms, finds dreariness and dearth
E'en where kind Nature's lavish blooms appear.
Around his path bright scenes unheeded lie,
For these are tinged not with his early dreams—
His heart is far away ! Thy varied sky
Dappling the silent hills with clouds and gleams—
Thy nest-like cottages and silver streams—
Are all that catch the wanderer's dreaming eye !

SONNET—FREEDOM*.

THERE is exulting pride, and holy mirth,
In Freedom's kindling eye ! Her radiant smile
Profoundly thrills this fair imperial isle,
The Queen of nations ! Glory of the earth !
Impassioned orisons are breathing forth,
And lofty aspirations. Phantoms vile
That chill the feeble spirit, and defile
The springs of thought and feeling in their birth,
Fade like the mists of morn, and lose the power
That made us willing slaves. For reason's light
Is bursting through the clouds that darkly lower,
And hide the face of Heaven ! O'er the night
Of slumbering millions—oh ! transcendent hour !
The sun of liberty is rising bright !

* Written in England.

CHRISTMAS.

[WRITTEN IN INDIA ON CHRISTMAS DAY.]

HERE is CHRISTMAS DAY again ! There is something as animating in the mere announcement as in the sound of a merry bell. It is the season of cheerful piety, of the renewal of old customs that keep the heart alive and tender, and of pure and child-like enjoyment. In our native land it is a time when the dreariness of out-of-doors nature heightens and concentrates the social pleasures and affections within the sheltered home. The hard ground and the frozen sheets of water remain unthawed by the pale and sickly sun ; but the heart of man melts within him, and the fountain of love is unlocked. The huge Christmas fire is the blazing sun that now warms and illumines each domestic circle. How beautifully its red light tinges every object in the snug apartment, and flashes on cheerful faces that glow as beneath the fervour of summer skies ! There is no winter within domestic walls.

Now do the most busy and bustling of men of business pause for a few pleasant hours in their quick career, and casting off all feverish anxiety for the future, abandon themselves wholly to present pleasure, or dwell with a serene and grateful tenderness on the joys of the long-vanished past. The stern pride of philosophy and the zeal of the worshipper of Mammon are suspended for a day The heart has an undivided reign over the kindlier and purer elements of our nature. Now friends long separated, and scattered over different corners of the kingdom, are re-called to one common centre, and surround the hearth that once echoed to the peals of their boyish laughter. The happy patriarch of the family gathers again around him the forms that he cherished from

their cradles, whom the cares and duties of manhood have drawn from the paternal roof. The day is sacred to the affections. The Goddess of domestic love demands the entire man. The Christmas hearth is a shrine at which tender recollections, charity and forgiveness, and social feeling and a gentle joy are the only acceptable offerings. On this day especially does

The inviolate island of the sage and free,

notwithstanding its cold and cloudy clime, deserve the title of *Merry England.* The very streets of her dingy metropolis look bright with happy faces and gay garments. The churches are decorated with sparkling holly, and sprigs of evergreen are in every window. With ponderous cakes, a rich mass of sweets, whose sugary coats rival in their brilliancy the snow upon the hills, and with the gigantic roast beef of old England, almost every table in the land is groaning. Even the poor man's heart is gladdened. The toil-worn mechanic and the humble cottager have for this day at least clean clothes and a substantial meal, and a cheerful fire, and a merry meeting of their unsophisticated associates. With a smiling air, and a hurried yet careful tread, they rush from the busy bake-house with their earthen dish of beef and potatoes that scents the atmosphere as they pass along. What an appetite-provoking sight and savour! The school-boy with his shining face will not "whine" to-day, nor creep, like snail, unwillingly to his task. This long-looked for day is to him, as to many others, the happiest of the year. His head has been as full of confectionary visions as his stomach will now be of the substantial reality. There is such a contagious merriment around, that the adult who does not feel like a boy again is not fit to be a man. Every generous spirit abandons itself to the influence and character of the season.

And all is conscience and tender heart.

It is sad to recollect that we in this far land are excluded from

so many of these simple but true enjoyments. All we can now do is to enjoy the memory of them.

A sound-headed man, however, cannot but be something of a cosmopolite and optimist. Wherever there are human hearts there are social feelings; and even in solitude, where external nature is not excluded by prison doors, there is always beauty: and God is every where. He leaves no corner of the world, no class of his creatures, forlorn and fatherless. Why then should we be guilty of an impious discontent, and recall the past only to feed our cares?

A distance of fifteen thousand miles, a tropical sun, and the presence of foreign faces need not make us forgetful of home-delights. That strange magician, Fancy, who supplies so many corporeal deficiencies and mocks at time and space, enables us to pass, in the twinkling of an eye, over the dreary waste of waters that divides us from the scenes and associates of our youth. We tread again our native shore. We sit by the hospitable hearth, and listen to the laugh of children. We exchange cordial greetings and friendly gifts. There is a resurrection of the dead, and a return of vanished years. We abandon ourselves to this sweet illusion, and again

Live o'er each scene, and be what we behold.

The warm-hearted and the imaginative cheat Time of half his triumph. The happiness of a dream is real, however false its images. To be pleasurably deceived is no great hardship. Happiness is our object, and the wise care little for the means. It is enough to know that the end is good and true, however it may have been obtained; for he who is in the enjoyment of *genuine* happiness cannot have forfeited any right of conscience to that precious dower:—evil intentions are not thus rewarded.

If, therefore, we turn our imagination into a right path, we can hardly give it too free a rein. Let any man take a retro-

spect of his life, and sum up his moments of real pleasure, and he will soon discover how much he owes to this glorious faculty. It is to the freshness and fervour of imagination in the dawn of life that we are to attribute the radiance of early joy. All things sparkle in its light, like the dew-bespangled fields of morning.

Let such amongst us as are willing to be children again, if it be only for an hour, resign ourselves to the sweet enchantment that steals upon the spirit when it indulges in the memory of early and innocent enjoyment. Let us seek again each well-remembered haunt of happier years. Ah! then how many faces long since faded shall bloom again! The white shroud of winter may conceal the countenance of earth, but the shroud of mortality shall be parted. The spring of human nature shall return. The cerulean heaven of many a laughing eye shall shine as brightly and tenderly as ever,—the voice of human merriment, more sweet than the song of birds, shall again respond to the music of the mind.

Even when this dream departs, we are not utterly forlorn. We return to this foreign shore—this distant exile—in sadness, but not despair. We have, all of us either children or friends in our native land. Perhaps we may once again embrace them—to part no more! But should fate deny the consummation of this dearly cherished hope—should we never again revisit "in the flesh" that happy circle—we may at least sympathize in their enjoyments. Parents especially have reason to hail this festive season with peculiar interest. The fireside holidays, not less delightful than the sunny noons of summer, are enjoyed by their dear little offspring with the same zest and intensity as thrilled their own hearts of yore. Their small, ruddy faces are illumined by the flickering light of the burning logs so liberally heaped upon the grate. The firewood crackles cheerily, and the chesnuts are swelling and bursting on the hob with a startling sound. The glories of the hospitable board, are demolished with a spirit

and celerity that maturer mouths would in vain essay to rival. The good things that go untasted from our tables in this City of Palaces, are treated with more respect by our little representatives in Britain. Even the substantial Christmas turkey disappears like a dream before the attacks of these gallant though lilliputian gastronomists. As the peasants in Goldsmith's Deserted Village wondered how the school-master's one small head could contain such a load of learning, we are puzzled to conceive how each little stomach can make room for such large stores of Christmas luxuries. Dear boys—sweet girls—ye seem more provident than your age would warrant! Is it because Christmas comes but once a year that ye lay in so lavish a supply?

But there is a limit even to the appetite of healthy children, and the rich, delightful meal, interrupted only by irrepressible bursts of laughter at jests more rife with merriment than wit, like all earthly enjoyments must have an end. It is succeeded, however, by a variety of delightful gambols. The bunch of misletoe is suspended from the ceiling, and occasions

Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathed smiles.

The little gay Lotharios and the flirts and coquettes in miniature, now present a scene that awakens a thousand exquisite recollections in the minds of the elder spectators. The boys betray a consciousness that they are doing a manly thing. The little misses think it necessary to appear coy and reluctant, yet seize sly occasions to look as *killingly* as they can, at their favorites of the bolder sex, and seem to recollect, as often as it suits their inclination, that under the green misletoe kissing is lawful, and "killing, no murder."

Then follow Blind-man's-buff, Hunt-the-slipper, and a round of accustomed games. After or before all these, according to the taste of the donors, come the Christmas presents, which are received by the happy little creatures with such grateful transports, and

exhibited with such innocent pride to their school-fellows when "*black Monday*" returns. The triumphant display of these treasures, and a fresh store of pocket-money, are among the parting consolations when they quit the sweet indulgences of home for the rigid laws of school.

It is true that in this strange land the celebration of Christmas can be attended with but few of those social observances, and those pleasant festivities around the blazing fire, which contrast so delightfully with the dreary aspect of external nature during an English winter; but though the season has lost something of its mirth, we can still keep it sacred to the memory of the past.

If we cannot collect around our festal board the forms familiar to our childhood, we can think and talk of them with tenderness and rapture. Those of us who have children in our native land may cheer ourselves with the thought, that on this long and impatiently expected holiday their little hearts will bound with merriment, and that they will be called upon, in the midst of their innocent pleasures, to remember their distant parents, to wish them many happy seasons, and perhaps, also, *a safe return to their native country*. But, alas! I allude to the latter wish with a faint and trembling heart, when I recollect how many of our expatriated countrymen have been disappointed in this the sweetest prospect of an Indian exile's life. They cherished, perhaps, as firm and fond a hope as any that yet glows in a living breast, to pass the cheerful evening of existence in some pleasure-haunted spot in dear old England,—and now they are lying in their last long sleep on this foreign shore!

SONNET—YOUTH.

Oh! there are green spots on the path of time
The morning traveller, passing gaily by,
Views with irreverent and careless eye,—
Till, with reverted gaze, when doomed to climb
With ceaseless toil adversity's rough steep,
He marks them in the shadowy distance lie
Like radiant clouds, that o'er an April sky,
'Mid gloom and strife, in silent beauty sleep.
Scenes of departed joy,—now mourned in vain!
To which my weary feet can ne'er return,
Farewell!—farewell!—Alas! how soon we learn,
Urged o'er Life's later paths of care and pain,
Where hang the shadows of the tempest stern,
That all is drear beyond Youth's flowery plain.

SONNET.

Our paths are desolate, and far apart—
Our early dreams have vanished;—never more
May we together mingle as before,
Our fond, impassioned spirits. Quick tears start
As eager memories rush upon my heart,
And rend oblivion's veil. E'en now the store
Of star-like spells that softly glimmered o'er
The twilight maze of youth, a moment dart
Their clouded beams on Care's reverted eye.
Alas! the promise of the past hath been
A brief though dear delusion:—all things fly
My onward way, and mock the lengthening scene,—
Through Life's dim mist thy form oft seemeth nigh,
Though lone and distant as the Night's fair Queen.

SONNETS—TO DEATH.

I.

Lord of the silent tomb! relentless Death!
Fierce victor and destroyer of the world!
How stern thy power! The shafts of fate are hurled
By thine unerring arm; and swift as breath
Fades from the burnished mirror,—as the wreath
Of flaky smoke from cottage hearths upcurled
Melts in cerulean air,—as sear leaves whirled
Along autumnal floods,—as o'er the heath
The quick birds rise and vanish,—so depart,
Nor leave a trace of their delusive light,
The meteor-dreams of man! Awhile the heart,
Of eager Folly swells—his bubbles bright
Float on the stream of time—but ah! thy dart
Soon breaks each glittering spell—and all is night!

II.

Insatiate Fiend!, at thy blood-dropping shrine,
In vain unnumbered victims wait thy will.
The life-streams of the earth thy thirst of ill
Shall never quench, 'till that bright morning shine
That bursts the sleep of ages. All repine
At thy dread mandates, and thy terrors thrill
The hero and the sage, though pride may still
The voice that would reveal them. Hopes divine,
Of faith and virtue born, alone may cheer
Mortality's inevitable hour.
Nor phrensied prayer, nor agonizing tear,
May check thine arm, or mitigate thy power.
Ruin's resistless sceptre is thy dower.
Thy throne, a world—thy couch, Creation's bier!

THEALMA AND CLEARCHUS*.

Dr. Johnson was accustomed to maintain that Pope brought English verse to its utmost possible perfection. He regarded the writers of the Elizabethan period as little better than inspired barbarians. In this respect, he was almost as great a heathen as Voltaire himself, whose opinion of Shakspeare† is a much more powerful argument against the character of the critic's own mind, than against the genius of our unrivalled dramatist. The French taste for the smart and artificial in style, introduced into England at the Restoration, lasted much longer than any critic of that day who had a sense of truth and nature, would have at all anticipated. But though truth and nature must at last prevail, it is wonderful for how long a period the influence of fashion may keep them in a state of complete subjection. For a season, and under peculiar circumstances, custom is a second nature, more powerful than the first.

When we look back at the different stages in the progress of English literature, we are struck with the extraordinary similarity of character displayed by contemporary writers. At a superficial view it would almost seem as if genius itself were produced by accidents and conventionalisms. Why should the poets

* Thealma and Clearchus:—A Pastoral History, *in smooth and easy verse. Written long since by* John Chalkhill, Esq., *an acquaintant and friend of* Edmund Spenser. *London: Printed fo.* Benj. Tooke, *at the Ship in St. Paul's Church yard*, 1683.

† Johnson forced himself to speak well of Shakspeare in his preface to the Plays, but he had perhaps no real relish for the great Prince of Dramatists. He seems in his heart to have liked Addison's *Cato* better than any of Shakspeare's dramas. His own *Irene* shows his leaning to the artificial and declamatory style. He speaks of the "barbarity of the age," in which so many men of might, besides Shakspeare himself, shed a glory upon our literature that has not been equalled in later times.

of the time of Elizabeth and James be a race of giants, and those of Anne *comparatively* a race of pigmies? In both eras, the poets were equally human beings, and of English origin. In the first mentioned period, there was an extraordinary abundance of all the higher faculties of the mind; in the second, there was an equally extraordinary dearth. The richness and facility of invention, the prodigality of fancy, the profound knowledge of human nature, which the old dramatists displayed, seem to be utterly beyond the reach of the intellects of later times. The former had such an entire sympathy with the world at large, that they could afford to forget their own identity, when pourtraying the minds and passions of other men. Hence the truth and variety of their delineations. But we have since had no writer gifted with that degree of the dramatic faculty which seemed so common an endowment in the time of Shakspeare. Cowper has spoken of a period when

> The sacred name
> Of Poet and of Prophet was the same;

And there was this two-fold character displayed by our good old poet and prophet, Daniel, when, in his dedication to the tragedy of *Philotas*, he thus expressed his opinion of the reign of Elizabeth:—

> And it may be, the genius of that time
> Would leave to her the glory in that kind,
> And that the utmost powers of English rhyme
> Should be within her peaceful reign confined;
> For since that time, our songs could never thrive,
> But lain as if forlorn; though in the prime
> Of this new raising season, we did strive
> To bring the best we could unto the time.

The serious drama in the reign of Anne is, generally speaking, beneath contempt. Even as a work of mere art, without reference to its utter dearth of inspiration, it has very little claim

to the respect of criticism. In the present day, through the study of our elder dramatists, to which the nation has been urged by a small class of original-minded critics, some struggles have been made by several popular writers to return to the long-deserted paths of truth and nature. But it is melancholy to remark with what small success. Our poets are almost all mere egotists. They attempt to lift the curtain of the general human heart, and, instead of discovering, as through a transparent glass, the internal movements of other men, they but behold, as in a mirror, their own self-complacent images. Thus, Lord Byron reproduced himself perpetually, not only in his miscellaneous poems, but in all his dramas. He fancied he was looking into a thousand hearts, while he was only looking into one. He dipped his pencil in his own inflamed and feverish blood, and thought every other man's was of the same colour.

No work since the time of Elizabeth may be looked upon as an original draught from nature by the hand of genius, in which the curtain of the human heart is lifted, and the secrets of our inner being are disclosed as by the power of a God. This degree of excellence was reserved exclusively for Shakspeare and his nobly-gifted contemporaries. There were no such miracles before his time, and there have been none since. It is strange that Nature, who is so sparing of the dramatic faculty, should have reserved all England's share of it, for one particular age. Since that period, we have had highly beautiful poems and romances in the dramatic form, but no genuine drama. In modern tragedy we have not a single new creation. The characters have all a hundred prototypes. They are mere outlines, and are the hereditary property of the stage. The interest depends not upon the minute and full development of character, but upon the nature of the incidents. They are like the poems of Scott, that borrow almost all their charm from the story. It is not that the characters in modern plays are absolutely unnatural, but that

they are too vague and general. The consequence is that we look more to the development of the plot than to the exhibition of the secret springs of action and of mental or moral idiosyncrasies. Take away from the dramatic writer of the present day his incidents and plots, and you leave him poor indeed; but we do not think so much of what happens to the persons of Shakspeare's drama, as of the nature of their hearts or intellects. Their character and not their fate is most present to our minds. *Hamlet* is an intensely interesting personage, without any reference whatever to his position; and equally so is *Macbeth*, though a being of a directly opposite nature. When we are presented with such full length pictures of humanity as these, so distinct and animated, we receive an impression that can never fade but with life itself. Did any man, woman, or child, that has been introduced to *Hamlet* or *Macbeth* or *Othello* or *Lear*, ever happen to forget them? But he who wishes to keep up his acquaintance with the personages of the modern drama, must have a strong memory indeed, if he does not find it necessary to refresh it with occasional re-perusals.

> They all wear out of us, like forms, with chalk
> Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.

We never look in the drama of the day for profound or original delineations of human nature, though it is not to be denied that we often find in it a great deal of elegant poetry, much refined thought and noble feeling, and many striking and pathetic incidents.

It would take up too much space and time on the present occasion, and lead us too far from the main object of this article, to attempt the arduous task of a philosophical explanation of the causes which have operated on the intellectual character of the literature of different periods. Of course, human nature must be always the same, but the development of its energies depends upon an infinite variety of accidents.

All that I now wish to insist upon, is a fact suggested by the curious old volume, the title of which is on the first page of the present paper. It has been asserted by the critics of the artificial school, that we had neither accuracy nor harmony of verse before the time of Waller; and that Pope brought our versification to a state of excellence, which it would be impossible to surpass. Now, if we even put aside all reference to the elder dramatists, and confine ourselves to the miscellaneous poets, it might easily be shown (unless one unvaried tone be harmony) that Waller and Pope were greatly inferior, as mere versifiers, to the author of the *Fairy Queen*, and perhaps even his obscure "*acquaintant and friend*," John Chalkhill. We might, if necessary, go so far back as old Chaucer, whose verse, when rightly read, has a fluency, a sweetness, and a variety of modulation, that put to shame the sing-song of the French school—

"That creaking lyre,
That whetstone of the teeth, monotony in wire."

Mr. Tyrwhitt has shown that Chaucer's versification, whenever his genuine text is preserved, was uniformly correct, although the harmony of his lines has, in many instances, been lost by the changes that have taken place in the mode of accenting our language. Chaucer was the inventor of the ten syllable or heroic verse to which Pope was so partial, and of which its original inventor left specimens, that Dryden despaired of improving.

That a very favourable change has come over the spirit of our poetical literature since the time of Anne, must be sufficiently obvious to the most casual observer; and that this change is to be attributed partly to the weariness and disgust occasioned by the vast flocks of rhyming parrots, who have given us perpetual repetitions of the easily echoed verse of Pope, and partly to the attention that has been recalled to our elder writers, will hardly be disputed: but it is perhaps not so generally understood that many even of our miscellaneous poets, who pretend to originality of style, have

only given up one object of imitation for another. The free heroic couplet, with its variety of pause, of such writers as Leigh Hunt, Keats, Shelley, and Barry Cornwall, which many people seem to look upon as a novelty, is several hundred years old. In reading the poem of *Thealma and Clearchus*, if it were printed with new type, on fine hot pressed paper, with the spelling modernized, we might easily fancy ourselves turning over the pages of the author of *Rimini*. It is not only the metre, but the entire spirit and manner of the old writers to which our modern poets have returned. Readers do not now look for only wit and good sense in a composition that aims at the dignity of poetry—these qualities do well enough for a prose essay; but in a poem, the fire of imagination is regarded as an essential ingredient. The genuine lovers of our poetical literature can never be sufficiently grateful to the two Wartons, who (the one by his excellent Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, and the other by his History of English Poetry), expedited that revolution in taste, which has made all men acknowledge the superiority in point of poetical merit of descriptions of nature, human and external, to smart satires and witty allusions to fashionable life. Their own poems did something towards bringing nature once more into vogue; but it was Thomson, Burns, and Cowper, who were the most influential leaders in this happy introduction of a nobler poetical system. If Dryden had possessed a larger share of fancy and feeling, his great superiority over Pope, in the range and energy of his mind, might have effectually prevented the latter from exercising so pernicious an influence on the public taste. But Dryden soon ceased to be a very popular poet, and the world becoming too nice to relish his rough strength, were satisfied with no verses that had not something of the polish and tone of his successor. Critics do not quarrel with Pope, because he is too harmonious and accurate, but because his harmony is too monotonous, and his accuracy, on which so much stress is laid by his

admirers, is confined to matters of comparatively slight importance. It is true that he is more uniformly *smooth* than Shakspeare himself, but his music is less varied and delightful; he is more uniformly correct in diction and metre, but his descriptions of external nature and the heart of man, besides being more slight and limited, are incomparably less accurate than those of our Prince of Dramatists. Even his accuracy of rhyme and grammar is grossly overrated: his works abound in flagrant violations of both. Lest, however, the reader should think that I mean to allow him no kind of merit, I may as well explain what I really think of him. I agree with those who place him at the head of the second order of poets; those in the first order being Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton. No writer ever condensed so much good sense into so narrow a compass. Condensation and perspicuity are amongst his most conspicuous merits. He was not, however, without fancy and feeling. Far from it. He had greatly more of both than his predecessor Dryden. There is a brilliant display of the first quality in his *Rape of the Lock,* and a pleasing specimen of the latter in his *Abelard and Eloisa.* But mere *fancy* will not make a poet of the very first order. *Imagination,* with which Pope was but sparingly endowed, is what is most required in the loftier efforts of the Muse. His pathos is not of a very powerful nature. It gently wins our sympathy, but I doubt if it ever wrung a tear from readers the most accustomed to the melting mood. It is said that the original letters of *Abelard and Eloisa* are far more pathetic than the poem. I believe all modern critics of any eminence have agreed to place Pope, as I have done, the first in the second rank, which, if rightly considered, is a highly honorable position. He who doubts this, should cast his eye over our list of poets, and observe how many great names are below him, and how few above.

Of the personal history of John Chalkhill, the author of *Thealma aud Clearchus,* our knowledge is slight indeed. It is

in vain to turn over the pages even of poetical antiquaries to discover any information concerning a writer who has little deserved to fall into such oblivion. In the tenth volume of the *Censura Literaria*, a work in which so many long forgotten writers have been revived, there are just five lines devoted to our author. This little paragraph contains nothing that was not perfectly well known before. In old *Izaac Walton's Complete Angler*, two of Chalkhill's songs are introduced: Doctor Johnson translated a part of one of these into Latin. The translation is preserved in Murphy's edition of Johnson's works. Neither Ellis, Warton, nor Headley make any allusion to Chalkhill. Ritson mentions him, but adds nothing, to our scanty knowledge, of the poet or his works. I am not certain whether any of the biographies of Spenser contain an allusion to his "acquaintant and friend." I suspect not. It is to be regretted that Spenser has devoted no generous line to the fame of his brother poet: a great and popular writer may preserve the literary life of his associates by a single potent word, and bid

Their little barks attendant sail,
Pursue his triumph, and partake the gale.

Mrs. Cooper, in the *Muses' Library*, published in 1741, Dr. Drake, in his *Shakespeare and his Times*, and Mr. Campbell, in his *Specimens of the British Poets*, are the only authors who have made any quotations from Chalkhill. Mr. Campbell does not give a specimen in the body of his selections; but in the first volume (printed last), containing his Essay on English Poetry, he apologizes for the omission as an *accidental oversight*. I am almost uncharitable enough to suspect, that it was not an *oversight*, but an *ignorance* on the part of the compiler, subsequently enlightened, that was the real cause of our fine old pastoral writer having failed to obtain an admission into that long rank of poets, in which so many meaner men have an honorable and

conspicuous place. Neither Anderson nor Chalmers make any mention of him*. It is to honest Izaac Walton that the world is indebted for the preservation of the Poem of *Thealma and Clearchus*. Our poet formed a kind of personal link between the old angler and the author of *The Faery Queen*. Chalkhill shook hands with Spenser, and Walton with Chalkhill. It was in his ninetieth year (the last of his life), that Walton published the poem of his friend, to which he affixed an affectionate preface. The pastoral character of this work must have been highly congenial to the taste of one who wrote so fine a prose-poem of a rural nature, as the *Complete Angler*. Chalkhill's poem was published only three or four years after the author's death, but had been written long before. The only information that Walton gives us of his friend, is in the following paragraph, with which he concludes his preface :—

"I have this truth to say of the author, that he was in his time a man, generally known, and well beloved; for he was humble and obliging in his behaviour, a gentleman, a scholar, very innocent and prudent: and indeed his whole life was useful, quiet, and virtuous. God send the story may meet with, or make, all readers like him."

Chalkhill's two songs, given in the *Complete Angler*, are in praise of fishing; and it is probable that he shared with his old friend Walton, in the love and practice of an amusement that none but a patient and tranquil-minded man can thoroughly enjoy. Leigh Hunt, in his *Indicator*, is rather severe upon this sport; and though he does not exactly agree with the old joke, attributed sometimes to Swift and sometimes to Doctor Johnson, that it is "a stick and a string, with a fly at one end and a fool at the other," he insists upon it that it is a very cruel and censurable pleasure. He erroneously ascribes one of Chalkhill's songs to

* Since this article was written I have read a notice of Chalkhill in the Retrospective Review.

Walton, and ridicules and reproves the patriarch of anglers for the sentiment in one of the stanzas which concludes as follows:

"Other joys
Are but toys,
And to be lamented."

Leigh Hunt ought to have allowed for some little extravagance in a laudatory lyric upon the writer's favorite amusement. The name of John Chalkhill is affixed to the song, and yet a critic like Leigh Hunt gives the authorship to another:—this is fame. I had nearly forgotten to mention, that Mr. Singer is said to have given the public a reprint of *Thealma and Clearchus*, but I have never met with it, and perhaps the poem is, at this day, *almost as good as manuscript*. Walton's old edition of the book fell into my hands but a few days ago, and it is the first copy I ever saw. As it is not very likely that many of my readers have been equally fortunate, I trust they will not be displeased to have some account of it, and a few characteristic extracts. It may be regarded as a remarkable indication of the obscurity of the author, that Mr. Singer in his reprint of the work, is said to have thrown out a conjecture, that, as Walton had been silent upon the life of his friend Chalkhill, he might be altogether a fictitious personage, and be only a pseudonyme for Walton himself*. Rennie, in his new edition of the Complete Angler, laughs at this conjecture; and, to convince us that it is quite unreasonable, informs us, that the tomb-stone of John Chalkhill is still to be seen in Winchester Cathedral, where Walton himself was buried. But the epitaph is given by Warton in his History of Winchester, and from this it appears, by a comparison of dates, that the John Chalkhill, who lies in his last sleep, in Winchester Cathedral, could not have been the "friend and acquaintant" of Spenser. The tomb-stone tells us, that it covers the remains of one who died in the year 1679, aged eighty years. He was therefore born in 1599,

* The Critic in the Retrospective Review is of the same opinion.

the year after Spenser's death. This somewhat perplexes us in our speculations regarding the history of our author; but it is difficult to believe that honest Izaac Walton would have put forth a poem under a feigned name, and have attempted to deceive mankind in his venerable old age, when he was probably preparing himself for another world. There was too much simplicity and truth in his character, to have enabled him to reconcile his conscience to an act of this nature. The fervid commendation, moral and critical, which he has lavished on the author, he never could have bestowed upon himself. But the office of paying a tribute to the memory, and preserving the literary remains of a friend, was an occupation in exact keeping with his character. It was a sacred duty, and the manner in which he has performed it, adds considerably to our respect for the name of Walton. It is certainly, however, to be regretted that, while paying an ardent tribute to the character of the author, he was not a little more explicit in the details of his personal history.

The poem of *Thealma and Clearchus,* though left unfinished by the author, extends to considerably more than three thousand lines. Of the story, which is very intricate, I shall not take the trouble to offer a complete analysis. It will be necessary, however, to explain as much of it as will render the extracts intelligible. The scene is laid in Arcadia. The actors are princes and princesses, and other personages of distinction, who have been induced, by various circumstances, to conceal their real characters, and beguile their sorrows in a pastoral life. The design is sufficiently fantastic, but the execution is often exquisitely natural. The poem opens with *Thealma,* at once a princess and a shepherdess, leading forth her "tender ewes," early in the morning, just as the sun begins to gild the tops of the mountains. Her soul is darkened with melancholy thoughts, on account of the absent *Clearchus,* whom she supposes to be dead. The cheerfulness of morning sheds no light upon her despondent spirit. But let the

poet himself describe her state in his own harmonious numbers :—

The airy choir salute the welcome day,
And with new carols sing their cares away ;
Yet move not her : she minds not what she hears :
Their sweeter accents grate her tender ears,
That relish nought but sadness : joy and she
Were not so well acquainted : one might see
E'en in her very looks a stock of sorrow
So much improved, 'twould prove despair to-morrow.

Here follows a description of a river, on the banks of which she seated herself, to indulge, at leisure, her tender sadness :—

Down in a valley 'twixt two rising hills,
From whence the dew in silver drops distils
To enrich the lowly plain, a river ran,
Hight Cygnus, (as some think from Læda's Swan
That there frequented ;) gently on it glides,
And makes indentures in her crooked sides,
And with her silent murmurs, rocks asleep
Her watery inmates : 'twas not very deep,
But clear as that Narcissus looked in, when
His self-love made him cease to live with men.

In the following passage, the allusion to *Collin* is evidently a compliment to Spenser :

Close by the river, was a thick-leav'd grove,
Where swains of old sang stories of their love ;
But unfrequented now since *Collin* died,
Collin that king of shepherds, and the pride
Of all *Arcadia*.

At noon, her servant, *Caretta*, brings a pastoral refection of curds, creams, and cheesecake. The faithful and affectionate domestic tries very hard to persuade her mistress to partake of these dainties. For a long time, her arguments and entreaties are without effect. At last, the poor girl hits upon the right string, by pressing the attention of her mistress to the fact that the fate of *Clearchus* was not clearly ascertained, and that it

was quite possible that fate had sent some lucky hand to save him in an extremity of danger; for *Thealma* herself had been snatched from a watery grave in which many of her friends supposed her still immured. There is a touch of genuine nature in the manner in which this consolatory suggestion breaks through *Thealma's* troubled thoughts, like a sudden light between shifting clouds.

> *Thealma*, all this while with serious eye,
> Ey'd the poor wench, unwilling to reply;
> For in her looks she read some true presage,
> That gave her comfort, and somewhat assuage
> The fury of her passions; with desire
> Her ears suck'd in her speech, to quench her fire:
> She could have heard her speak an age, sweet soul,
> So pretty loud she chid her, and condole
> With her in her misfortunes. O, said she,
> What wisdom dwells in plain simplicity!
> Prithee (my dear *Caretta*) why dost cry?
> I am not angry; good girl, dry thine eye,
> Or I shall turn child too.

She then consents to partake of her servant's pastoral delicacies, if she will only promise to be merry. This change in her mistress, for a moment, overwhelms *Caretta* with conflicting emotions of grief and joy.

> Still *Caretta* wept,
> Sorrow and gladness such a struggling kept
> Within her for the mastery: at the length
> Joy overcame, and speech recovered strength.

While the mistress and her maid are thus occupied in an interchange of kind expressions, they are startled by the sudden appearance of a boar pursued by a huntsman; and as the chace is described with great force and freshness, I shall lay the entire passage before the reader. The passages in italics are highly graphic.

A fell boar
Rush'd from the wood, enrag'd by a deep wound
Some huntsman gave him : *up he ploughs the ground,*
And whetting of his tusks, about 'gan roam,
Champing his venom's moisture into foam.
Thealma and her maid, half dead with fear,
Cry'd out for help : their cry soon reacht his ear,
And he came snuffling tow'rd them : still they cry,
And fear gave wings unto them as they fly.
The sheep ran bleating o'er the pleasant plain,
And airy Echo answers them again ;
Redoubling of their cries to fetch in aid,
Whilst to the wood the fearful virgins made,
Where a new fear assay'd them : 'twas their hap
To meet the boar's pursuer in the gap
With his sword drawn, and all besmear'd with gore,
Which made their case more desp'rate than before,
As they imagin'd ; yet so well as fear
And doubt would let them, as the man drew near
They implor'd his help : he minds them not, but spying
The chaséd boar in a thick puddle lying,
Tow'rds him he makes ; the boar was soon aware,
And with an hideous noise sucks in the air.
Upon his guard he stands, his tusks new whets,
And up on end his grisly bristles sets.
His wary foe went traversing his ground,
Spying out where was best to give a wound.
And now *Thealma's* fears afresh began
To seize on her ; her care's now for the man,
Lest the adventurous youth should get some hurt,
Or die untimely : *up th' boar flings the dirt,*
Dy'd crimson with his blood; his foe at length
Watching his time, and doubling of his strength,
Gave him a wound so deep, it let out life,
And set a bloody period to their strife.

The huntsman turns out to be *Thealma's* brother, Prince *Anaxus*, who had supposed his sister dead. They recognize each other with delight, and go together to *Thealma's* cottage. The shadows of night now fell upon the fields, and all Arcadia was at rest, except the fisherman *Rhotus*, who was yet at sea. By the light of the

moon he espied a frigate that he discovered to have come from Lemnos. The master of the ship hailed the fisherman, and, after dropping an anchor, invited him on board. He at once obeyed the call, and found all the passengers with such an air of sadness in their countenances as indicated that some misfortune had befallen them. The most conspicuous of them, a grave old lord who went by the name of *Cleon*, questioned the honest fisher as to the news of Arcadia. *Rhotus*, on this, gives a description of this paradise of the poets, as it was in the age of gold, to which unhappily the age of iron had succeeded.

This description, which is too long to quote, reminds me of some passages in Sidney's pastoral romance. Who would not wish to live in such an age and country, as Sidney and Chalkhill have described, and have inscribed upon his monument (as on the tomb in the picture of Poussin), " I ALSO WAS AN Arcadian !"

" Would I had fallen upon those happy days,
That poets celebrate ; those golden times,
And those Arcadian scenes, that Maro sings,
And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose."

Cowper.

We cannot but marvel at the cold severity of Godwin's judgment when he confessed that, in perusing Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, the thought occurred to him that our ancestors who admired it, must have had a blood that crept but feebly in their veins, and that they were yet only half awaked from the stupidity of the savage state. They had indeed no taste for the convulsive contortions and melodramatic horrors that we look for in the modern Muse ; but such fresh and faithful and Claude-like representations of external nature and rural objects as abound in Sidney's prose and in Spenser's verse, and impart a feeling of the open air, were congenial to their healthier imaginations. Lord Orford, too, in his "*Royal and Noble Authors,*" has told us that

the *Arcadia* is " tedious, lamentable, and pedantic*." It is said, however, that it gave delight to Shakspeare, and even in a later day to Milton; and *their* admiration is a tolerable set-off against the sneers of modern critics. It might have been supposed, as I think Hazlitt has observed, that the single pastoral image of *the shepherd boy piping as though he should never be old,* would have saved it from the contempt of every reader who has himself any share of imagination. It is true that the style is occasionally quaint and prolix, and the sentiments affected and fantastic; but the strange or unsightly foliage of some few trees of this Arcadian Orchard do not render less delightful the ripe and precious fruits that abound beneath it and the general beauty of the scene.

But let us return to the poem. Both *Rhotus* and *Cleon* are subsequently discovered to be noblemen of high character, who had been persecuted by the government;—the latter had been banished. It is not at all necessary to enter into the minute details of their adventures. To confess the truth, the whole story of the poem is a little tedious, and there are so many plots within plots, and the main thread is so intricately interwoven with the general texture, that nothing but the exquisite truth and simplicity of the descriptions, and the sweetness and variety of the verse, could make so long and involved a narrative at all supportable. On this account I shall not weary the reader or myself, with following up the progress of the story, but select such detached passages as will show the author's genius to

* Sir William Temple, in his Essay on Poetry, has paid a glowing tribute to the merits of the *Arcadia*. " The true spirit or vein of ancient poetry," says he, " in this kind," (prose romance, a kind of poetry in prose) " seems most to shine in Sir Philip Sidney, whom I esteem both the greatest poet, and the noblest genius of any that have left writings behind them, and published in ours or any other modern language; a person born capable, not only of forming the greatest ideas, but of leaving the noblest examples, if the length of his life had been equal to the excellence of his wit and virtues."

the best advantage. The following description of the Temple of Diana, is a picture as highly finished as any thing in modern art.

Within a little silent grove hard by
Upon a small ascent, he might espy
A stately chapel, richly gilt without,
Beset with shady sycamores about:
And ever and anon he might well hear
A sound of musick steal in at his ear
As the wind gave it being: so sweet an air
Would strike a syren mute and ravish her.
He sees no creature that might cause the same,
But he was sure that from the grove it came.
And to the grove he goes to satisfy
The curiosity of ear and eye.
Thóróugh the thick leav'd boughs he makes a way,
Nor could the scratching brambles make him stay;
But on he rushes, and climbs up the hill,
Thóróugh a glade he saw, and heard his fill.
A hundred virgins there he might espy
Prostrate before a marble deity:
Which by its portraiture appear'd to be
The image of DIANA: on their knee
They tender'd their devotions: with sweet airs,
Off'ring the incense of their praise and prayers.
Their garments all alike;——————
And cross their snowy silken robes, they wore
An azure scarf, with stars embroidered o'er.
Their hair in curious tresses was knit up,
Crown'd with a silver crescent on the top.
A silver bow their left hand held, their right
For their defence, held a sharp-headed flight
Drawn from their broidered quiver, neatly tied
In silken cords, and fastened to their side.
Under their vestments something short before
White buskins lac'd with ribbanding they wore.
It was a catching sight for a young eye
That Love had fir'd before; he might espy
One, whom the rest had sphere-like circled round,
Whose head was with a golden chaplet crown'd.
He could not see her face, only his ear
Was blest with the sweet words that came from her.

Who would suppose, from the style of this beautiful passage, that it had been written upwards of three centuries ago? Dr. Johnson knew very little of our old English poetry, or he would never have so egregiously overrated the improvements of the moderns. It is wonderful how slight a change has been effected in our language in so long a period as three hundred years. There is nothing in the lines just quoted to indicate their antiquity. There is a greater number of old phrases in some of our living poets than in the page of Chalkhill. Though we dislike the incongruous mixture of archaisms and neologisms which deform the productions of too many of the poets of the present day, we observe with great delight that the study of our elder writers has led to the introduction of a fresher style of description and a more varied music of verse than the public were accustomed to a few years ago.

The following description of the situation of the cell of the witch *Orandra* would have been worthy of Spenser himself:

Down in a gloomy valley thick with shade
Which two aspiring hanging rocks had made,
That shut out day, and barr'd the glorious sun
From prying into th' actións there done;
Set full of box, and cypress, poplar, yew,
And hateful elder that in thickets grew,
Amongst whose boughs the screech-owl and night-crow
Sadly recount their prophecies of woe,
Where leather-wingéd bats, that hate the light,
Fan the thick air, more sooty than the night.
The ground o'er-grown with weeds, and bushy shrubs,
Where milky hedgehogs nurse their prickly cubs:
And here and there a mandrake grows, that strikes
The hearers dead with their loud fatal shrieks;
Under whose spreading leaves the ugly toad,
The adder, and the snake make their abode:
Here dwelt *Orandra*.

Then follows a very striking description of the cell itself.

Her cell was hewn out in the marble rock,
By more than human art; she need not knock,

The door stood always open, large and wide,
Grown o'er with woolly moss on either side,
And interwove with ivie's flatt'ring twines,
Thro' which the carbuncle and di'mond shines;
Not set by art, but there by Nature sown
At the world's birth, so star-like bright they shone.
They serv'd instead of tapers to give light
To the dark entry, where perpetual Night,
Friend to black deeds, and sire of ignorance,
Shuts out all knowledge; lest her eye by chance
Might bring to light her follies: in they went.
The ground was strow'd with flowers, whose sweet scent,
Mixt with the choice perfumes from *India* brought,
Intoxicates his brain, and quickly caught
His credulous sense; the walls were gilt and set
With precious stones, and all the roof was fret
With a gold vine, whose straggling branches spread
All o'er the arch; the swelling grapes were red;
This art had made of rubies cluster'd so,
To the quick'st eye they more than seem'd to grow.
About the walls lascivious pictures hung,
Such as whereof loose *Ovid* sometimes sung.

The portrait of the witch herself, though powerfully drawn, is rather too disgusting in some of its details, to permit of my transferring it to these pages, as my sole object is to give pleasure to the reader. The following description of King *Alexis* (who turns out to be *Clearchus*), under the alternate influence of opposite emotions, is highly poetical and picturesque. The metre is singularly harmonious. It is a pity that the beauty of this little passage is somewhat marred by the word *dropsy* in the first line.

Now a fair day, anon a dropsy cloud
Puts out the sun, and, in a sable shroud,
The day seems buried; when the clouds are o'er,
The glorious sun shines brighter than before:
But long it lasts not; so *Alexis* far'd:
His sun-like majesty was not impair'd
So much by sorrow, but that now and then
It would break forth into a smile again.

In this beautiful old pastoral, a reader unacquainted with our elder English poets might find many lines that he would regard as strangely irregular and inharmonious. The very same passages, however, would seem perfectly smooth and accurate to an ear accustomed to our ancient pronunciation. In the following lines, for example, readers who have confined their poetical studies to modern verse, would feel themselves disappointed of the legitimate quantity of syllables.

> But she, being unwilling to be known,
> Answered his quere with this questión.
> And all the passengers, save a young man,
> That fortune rescued from the oceán.
> A hot spurred youth hight Hylas, such a one,
> As pride had fitted for commotión.

But a very superficial acquaintance with our elder poets would prevent a reader from falling into a mistake of this nature. A great number of such words as *patience, partial, nation,* &c. &c. that are now inelegantly shortened into two sounds, were invariably resolved into their component syllables by all our poets until about the middle of the sixteenth century. Mr. Gifford, in his edition of Massinger, speaks of this peculiarity of accent as more characteristic of that writer than of his cotemporaries; but on this point he is undoubtedly mistaken. It was not a characteristic of any individual writer: it was the universal practice of the age. Every reader of Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford and Marlowe, is aware that it is almost impossible to light on a single page of their productions in which they have not used such words as have been alluded to with a distinct trisyllabic sound. They frequently gave by this means a fluency and sweetness to their verse, of which the moderns have been deprived by the change in our pronunciation. The dactyle *nasheón, (nation)* is surely a richer and more pleasing sound, especially in a line of verse, than when cut down into the misera-

ble modern trochee, *nashun*. The former has a tremulous vibration of tone that often gives an inexpressible charm to the music of the line in which it may occur. I envy not that reader's ear who can prefer the heavy, monotonous march of our modern verse to the lighter and less regular, but more natural movement of our ancient metres. Shenstone has remarked, with that delicacy of taste for which he was so much distinguished, that there is a great beauty in the judicious use of dactyles in English heroic verse. He thought that Pope introduced it far too sparingly, and quotes from the "Windsor Forest" the second line of the following couplet, as an instance of its agreeable effect.

Swift trouts diversified with crimson stains,
And pikes, the tyrants of the *watery* plains.

Shenstone justly observes (though not perhaps precisely in these words, for I quote from memory) that the substitution of a trochee, such as the word *liquid*, would utterly destroy the finer harmony of the line. It would be easy to multiply examples in support of Shenstone's criticism, but I shall content myself with adding the following from the "Rape of the Lock."

Our humbler province is to tend the fair,
Not a less pleasing though less *glorious* care.

Though our modern poets have already destroyed so many beautiful dactyles, it will be long, I hope, before they turn the noble word *glorious* into *glorus!*

Besides the defects in the versification of Chalkhill that I have shown to be apparent and not real, there are a few peculiarities that are not to be defended with equal ease. I allude to the occasional inaccuracies of his rhyme. But if Chalkhill has sometimes deformed his verses with extremely imperfect rhymes, he is kept in countenance not only by the best writers of his time, but by one of the most correct of modern versifiers—namely, Pope himself. He who on the advice of Walsh, "the Muse's judge and friend,"

devoted his chief energies to the task of surpassing all his predecessors in point of accuracy, did not scruple to make use of such rhymes as *thought fault—draught thought—skull fool—turn born—imbrued blood—fiend friend—speak take—debate that—join line—compelling Helen—fellow prunnella,* and innumerable others of the same nature. I do not place any stress upon such trivial matters, but there are critics who would condemn in other poets what may pass unnoticed in the works of their own idol. Pope has himself observed, that poetry is an especially useful study to a foreigner desirous of speaking the language in which it may be written with accuracy and grace.

What will a child learn sooner than a song?
What better teach a foreigner the tongue?

No Englishman, however, who has an ear or judgment of his own, could listen with gravity or patience to the sound of such words as we have just quoted from Pope, if they were enunciated in exact correspondence to the rhyme. Poor Kirke White's first volume of poems, which he had sent to the editor of the *Monthly Review,* with such feverish anxiety, was condemned by the savage and senseless Aristarchus, because *boy* and *sky* were used as corresponding terminations; and yet the same profound and impartial critic had doubtless seen rhymes greatly more imperfect in the works of Pope, without questioning for a moment that author's genius. It would be absurd, indeed, to judge of a poet's merits exclusively by his accuracy as a rhymester; but when an author's "*absolute faultlessness*"* (an expression applied by Lord Byron to the works of Pope) is too positively and frequently insisted upon, the attention of more sober critics is forced towards errors that would otherwise have escaped them entirely, or have been

What does even Pope himself say on this point?
"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be."

regarded with indifference. A humourous poem might be written by a punster, like •Hood, upon the imperfect rhymes of Pope —such as, groves *loves* (*loaves*),—waste *past* (*paste*),—care *shear* (*share*),—take *speak* (*spake*),—wear *star* (*stare or stair*),— alone *town* (*tone*),—desert *heart* (*hurt*),—frost *coast* (*cost*),— adores *powers* (*pores or pours*),—joy *tye* (*toy*),—trod *showed* (*shod*),—track *take* (*tack*),—join *line* (*loin*),—worn *turn* (*torn*), —song *tongue* (*tong*),—extreme *phlegm* (*phleme*),—come *doom* (*dumb*),—food *flood* (*flued*),—pour *shower* (*shore*), or shower *pour* (*power*),—flood *stood* (*stud*),—bound *wound* [a hurt], *wound* [bandaged],—compare *war* (*wear* or *were*),—streams *Thames* (*themes*),—rest *least* (*lest*),—strow *bough* (bow [bo]),— suffice *prize* (*price*),—adores *powers* (*pores* or *pours*),—fool *skull* (*school*), &c. &c. &c. The above rhymes are taken faithfully from the pages of Pope, and without going through a very large portion of his productions.

Hazlitt has remarked, that Steele (in the Tatler) was the first writer, who used the antithetical style and verbal paradoxes which Burke was so fond of, in which the adjective is in seeming opposition to the substantive, as "*dignified obedience*," "*proud submission*," &c. &c. But this was not the case. The poem before us has several examples of them. In the first two or three pages we have "*cruel fortunate*," "*dumb eloquence*," "*silent murmurs*," &c. &c. There are some curious illustrations also of Pope's favorite rule of making the sound an echo to the sense. Here is an instance.

> He had a man-like look, and sparkling eye,
> A front whereon sate such a majesty,
> As awed all his beholders; his long hair
> After the Grecian fashion, without care
> *Hung down loosely on his shoulders*, black as jet.

This description reminds me of Hamlet's remarks upon his father's picture.

See, what a grace was seated on this brow :
Hyperion curls ; the front of Jove himself ;
An eye like Mars to threaten and command, &c.

There are many other passages that recal the great dramatic poet.

Thy cruel augury
Wounds me at heart ; can thy art cure that wound ?
Sylvanus? No, no medicine can be found
In human skill to cure that tender part.
When the soul's pained, it finds no help of art.

This must bring to the reader's recollection a sentiment in Macbeth.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased ? &c.

There is a passage in Lear, not unlike the following :

But how he might secure his Florimel,
That thought most troubled him ; he knew full well
She was the white was aimed at.
Thealma and Clearchus.

See better, Lear : and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye. *King Lear.*

The commentators explain that the word *blank* here is a term borrowed from archery ; the *white* of a target is that part of it which the arrow is chiefly aimed at. The same expression is used in the *Taming of the Shrew*. The following lines are very similar to a passage in Shakspeare.

At the sight
She frowned upon him, and with angry look,
A title that but ill became the book
Wherein her milder thoughts were writ.

The passage I allude to is the following, which occurs in the second part of Henry the Fourth.

Yea, this man's brow, like to a title leaf,
Foretells the nature of a tragic volume.

The poem of Thealma and Clearchus breaks off very abruptly, and I shall follow its example by bringing this article to an immediate close. At the end of the fragment (for such it is, though a very long one) honest Izaac Walton, with the quaintness and simplicity in keeping with his character, appends the following note:

"And here the author died, and I hope the reader will be sorry."

SONG.

THE sun is up—but feebly still
He throws his yellow beam;
The gray mist shrouds the distant hill,
And floats along the stream.

The fluttering lark hangs on the air,
And pours his matin lay,
While Mirth and rosy Health repair
To greet the rising day.

The forest branches slowly wave
Where sport the zephyrs coy,
And Echo, from her hollow cave,
Repeats each note of joy.

The light airs cool my fevered brow,
And pain and care depart,
For Nature's holy radiance now
Hath flashed upon my heart!

THE SEASONS OF LIFE.

I.

Could beauty's early bloom return, and boyhood's voice of mirth,
Like floral hues and songs of birds when Spring revives the earth;
Though forms should fade—and hearts grow cold—and life's fair flowers decay,
'Twere sweet to know that wintry spell ere long might pass away!

II.

But when life's fleeting seasons fail, they leave the soul forlorn;
E'en Hope is silent at their close, of all her magic shorn;
Her brief successive lights but lead the pilgrim to his doom—
The cold and dreamless sleep of death—the dungeon of the tomb.

III.

The green earth glitters in the sun—the skylark bathes in light—
Rich odours float upon the breeze from vernal blossoms bright—
A busy hum of insect joy the cheerful valley fills,
And wandering Echo's shout is heard, like laughter, in the hills!

IV.

Such sights and sounds and charms we leave, and, dearer far than all,
The faces that we loved in youth—the tones that yet enthral;—
Oh! when the thought of that dark hour o'ershades each bliss below,
How quails the horror-stricken heart—how voiceless is the woe!

V.

Yet when the solemn mandate comes that bids the doomed prepare,
To change for death's dark stifling cell the free and pleasant air,
Can no sweet sound the prisoner cheer—no hope-rekindling ray?
Ah, yes!—the voice that frees the soul—the light of endless day!

ON CONVERSATION.

Without good company, indeed, all dainties
Lose their true relish, and, like painted grapes,
Are only seen, not tasted.

Massinger.

"By the use of the tongue, God hath distinguished us from beasts; and by the well or ill using it we are distinguished from one another; and therefore though silence be innocent as death, harmless as a rose's breath to a listant passenger, yet, it is rather the state of death than life: and therefore when the Egyptians sacrificed to Harpocrates, their God of silence, in the midst of their rites they cried out, "The tongue is an angel; good or bad, that is as it happens."

Jeremy Taylor.

"Conversation," says Seneca, "forms a large portion of the comfort of human life." This commendation, however, is not to be applied to ordinary discourse. "The best conversation," says the same moralist, "that we can ever have, is with philosophers; I mean such as teach matter, not words; that preach up to us necessary things, and engage us to practise them." The ancients appear to have turned conversation to nobler purposes than the moderns; for not possessing those ready means of circulating knowledge through the medium of printed books and papers, which have been rendered so effective in the present age, they were compelled to trust for much of their fame and influence to oral communications. The original mode of multiplying manuscripts was tedious and unsatisfactory, compared to the admirable process by which thought is now circulated with an almost electrical rapidity through all quarters of the globe. A man of superior sense and genius, unable to do justice to his own talents in social intercourse, may now console himself with the assurance that he has other and more powerful means of pouring out his soul, and of arousing the sympathy and attention of his fellow-

creatures. If the impression produced by his printed labours be less vivid and immediate than the effect of graceful and impassioned conversation, it is at all events far more permanent and extensive. Men of genius, who are conscious of their influence as authors, are often indifferent to the honours and advantages of colloquial eloquence, and indeed are too apt to associate their ideas of wisdom and ability with books alone. Confined to their silent cells they look not abroad upon the living world, but upon the world of letters; and in proportion to their real ignorance of life is their contempt for the general mass of their fellow-men. Those writers who have taken a more enlarged and philosophical view of human nature, have acknowledged the innumerable benefits to be derived from a free and cordial personal intercourse with society. The eccentricity, the dogmatism, the self-conceit and the visionary character of the literary recluse, would be greatly checked by an interchange of sentiments and opinions with men of less genius, but greater knowledge of life and of mankind. He would see subjects, which he had been accustomed to study from one point only, in an infinite variety of lights, and his mind would be stirred by fresh ideas and new suggestions. The learned and judicious Locke did not scorn the opinions of men in common life, and well knew the good that was to be gathered from a variety of counsel. The vulgar saying, that two heads are more than equal to one, is full of truth. "We see" (says the great writer just mentioned) "but in part, and therefore it is no wonder we conclude not right from our partial views. This might instruct the proudest esteemer of his own parts, how useful it is to talk and consult with others, even such as come short of him in capacity, quickness and penetration; for since no one sees all, and we generally have different prospects of the same thing according to our different positions, it is not incongruous to think, nor beneath any man to try, whether another may not have notions of things which have escaped him,

and which his reason would make use of if it came into his mind." Many of the wild absurdities in which theorists and metaphysicians have occasionally indulged, would probably have never found their way into print if they had been previously well canvassed in conversation. It is wonderful how much more plain good sense is diffused throughout society than is generally supposed. There is no opinion, however extravagant and ridiculous, which has not been countenanced and supported by some individual author, who would perhaps have been ashamed of its advocacy had it been freely discussed in his presence in an intelligent private circle. When called upon to explain his ideas in conversation, a man is obliged to give the very pith of the question. His hearers have no time or patience for extraneous details, or elaborate and ingenious mystification.

"The most fruitful and natural exercise of the mind," says Montaigne, "is conversation, the use of which I find to be more agreeable than any other exercise in life. For this reason, were I now forced to make my choice, I think I would rather lose my sight, than my hearing or my speech."

It is not good for man to be alone, and such is the force of the social principle, that even those who have willingly immured themselves for a time in the secret depths of solitude, are stirred with an irrepressible yearning towards the first human face that breaks like a gleam of sunshine upon their unnatural isolation. Men who meet in a coffee-house at London with cold and uneasy reserve, would fly into each other's arms in the deserts of Arabia.

They who in crowded cities lead a lonely life, are only reconciled to their position by the consciousness of the proximity of their fellow-men. They would make as melancholy Robinson Crusoes as the most constant haunters of balls and parties. We are never so truly happy as in the interchange of thoughts and feelings with each other, and the retired student is not less

ambitious of the sympathy and esteem of his fellow-creatures than those who revel in the enjoyments of social life. His craving after the regard of the world is, in fact, far more vehement and intense; for not contented with the admiration and love of a comparatively narrow circle of associates, he demands the sympathy of the public mind. He hears the distant echoes of his fame, and exults in that supremacy of intellect, compared to which the power of a king is of a limited and vulgar nature. Silent reserve and an air of coldness are by no means infallible indications of apathy or selfishness. There is perhaps no man, for example, so little understood or so ill appreciated in general society, as the poet, whose excellence in his art is a proof of an impassioned temperament. But often while his heart overflows with social love, he is apparently the most unsocial of human beings. Deep feelings do not rise rapidly to the lips, and are rather checked than encouraged by the trivial forms and ceremonies of worldly intercourse. The most essential attribute of the true poet is a profound sympathy with human nature, and with the whole external world. It is the intensity of his emotions that compels him to " wreak himself upon expression," and appeal to the hearts of his fellow-creatures. As the passionate outpouring of his feelings would be ridiculous and unseasonable in the crowded hall, he retires to his study. When his companions in society are struck with his seeming apathy, his soul perhaps is tossed upon a sea of thought, or involved in a tempest of wild and incommunicable dreams. From being in some measure unfitted by his deep abstractions for the ordinary intercourse of life, he devotes himself more exclusively to the cultivation of his divine art, by which he is enabled even in his retirement to touch the general pulse with the contagious passion of his own heart. In his remotest solitude he clings to human ties, and rejoices in stirring with kindred feelings the breasts of thousands to whom he is personally unknown. He feeds his inmost spirit with the

manna of praise. He lives on the public breath. When he fails to impart delight, he is himself incapable of receiving it. His existence is inseparably connected with that of his fellow-creatures, and a mental isolation would be worse than death. His pride is in the power he possesses over the human heart. How glorious is the might of that magician, who, thus shrouded in personal obscurity, causes the waves of human passion to rise and fall at his command; who fires countless multitudes with his own enthusiasm, and stamps immortality on every burning word!

There are poets who have expressed a contempt for the public, and an indifference to fame: but this is an unworthy affectation, and is strangely at variance with the general tenor of their lives. Epictetus has exposed the inconsistency of the ambitious with a just severity. "Why do you walk as if you had swallowed a bar of iron? Who are those by whom you would be admired? Are they not the very people whom you were wont to say were mad? Would you then be admired by madmen?"

It has often been a subject of dispute, whether reading or conversation be attended with the greater benefit. The combination of both is of course more instructive than either separate. Montaigne has remarked that "The study of books is a languid and feeble motion, that does not warm: whereas conversation at once instructs and exercises." "Reading," says Lord Bacon, "maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man." The three advantages combined, supposing the accompaniment of intellect and virtue, would make a perfect man.

Sir William Temple has a remark which bears on the same subject. "Study," says he, "gives strength to the mind; conversation grace. The first is apt to give stiffness, the other suppleness." Locke is a great advocate for conversation, and warns the learned not to think there is no truth but in the sciences that they study, or the books that they read. Plato

preferred conversation to books; and Seneca says, that "writing answers a good purpose, but conversation a better."

If all men were philosophers, the advantages of conversation could not easily be overrated; but when we recollect how few are competent to raise its tone with important speculations, and that it too generally turns on trivial topics, or treats the weightiest with an impatient flippancy and a shallow dogmatism, it deserves not that high rank in our estimation which is rightly conceded to the deliberate and lasting wisdom enshrined in books. The conversation of ardent and original thinkers, is indeed

"The feast of reason and the flow of soul;"

but how rarely do such men meet together! It is strictly true, as I have before admitted, that the conversation even of inferior persons has often the effect of raising new trains of thought, of refreshing the mind by an occasional change of its position, and of increasing our knowledge of human life; but these benefits, great and unquestionable as they are, by no means equal that elegant and profound instruction which literature affords. The word conversation is rather vague. Were we to limit its meaning to the actual interchange of ideas and sentiments, it would be easy to enlarge upon its vast utility and its exquisite enjoyments; but unhappily it is often applied to that glittering nonsense which passes from the mind like rain-drops from the wings of birds. Dr. Johnson would not allow that to be styled conversation in which nothing is discussed.

The French are generally esteemed more skilful in colloquial intercourse than the English, but their excellence lies rather in chit-chat than conversation. They do not so much converse as talk. In readiness and fluency of speech they certainly surpass us, but not in depth or originality of thought. As there is a greater variety and force of character in our own countrymen,

they would be far more rich and entertaining in conversation than the French, if they were only half as communicative and polite. Profound thinkers, however, are sometimes dull in company, for when they have to dive as it were to the bottom of their souls for the treasures which they would communicate to others, they cannot keep pace with those ready speakers whose thoughts lie upon the surface. "Men," says Sir William Temple, "talk without thinking, and think without talking." The same writer has quaintly remarked that "women, some sort of fools and madmen, are the greatest talkers." Authors, who are silent in society, seem to take a pleasure in revenging themselves in print on the garrulous and the noisy in conversation. Butler has humorously observed that those who talk on trifles speak with the greatest fluency, because the tongue is like a race-horse which runs the faster the lesser weight it carries. Jeremy Taylor remarks, that great knowledge, if it be without vanity, is the most severe bridle of the tongue. In the case of a fool, he says, "the tongue is hung loose, being like a bell in which there is nothing but tongue and noise." Cowper, whose timid and painful reserve rendered one of the finest minded men in the world the worst of companions, and who painted from himself in the following couplet—

"Our sensibilities are so acute,
The fear of being silent makes us mute,"

has omitted no occasion of sneering at voluble and ready talkers.

"Where others toil with philosophic force
Their *nimble nonsense* takes a different course,
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump."

"I know a lady, that loves talking so incessantly that she will not give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue that an echo must wait till she dies, before it can

catch her last words;—" This sentence from Congreve would apply to the character of Madame de Staël, 'though her brilliancy made amends for her rapidity. Schiller, in a letter to Goëthe, says of her that the worst thing about her, is "the marvellous rapidity of her tongue; for in order to follow her, one must absolutely convert himself wholly into an organ of hearing." Byron describes her with more severity. "I admire her abilities," says his Lordship, "but really her society is overwhelming—an avalanche that buries one in glittering nonsense—all snow and sophistry." Swift has observed with his usual shrewdness and love of satire, that "the common fluency of speech in many men and most women, is owing to scarcity of matter, and a scarcity of words; for whoever is a master of language and has a mind full of ideas, will be apt in speaking to hesitate upon the choice of both; whereas common speakers have only one set of ideas and one set of words to clothe them in: and these are always ready at the mouth; so people come faster out of a church when it is almost empty, than when a crowd is at the door." This apt and striking illustration reminds me of a similar passage in Montaigne: "The solicitude," says he, "of performing well, and the effort of the mind too far strained, and too intent upon its undertaking, break the chain of thought, and hinder its progress, as is the case with water which being pressed by its force and quantity, passes with difficulty out of the neck of a full bottle*." Shakspeare, who painted almost every diversity of human character, and touched upon almost every subject with equal happiness, has hit off the great talker with admirable truth and spirit:—"Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice; his reasons are as two grains of

* This illustration is given a different turn by Pope, who says "it is with narrow-souled people as with narrow-necked bottles; the less they have in them, the more noise they make in pouring it out."

wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you find them; and when you have them, they are not worth the search." There is an Italian proverb which says, that an eternal talker would be more agreeable company if the lock on his door were placed upon his mouth.

The fair sex are usually great talkers, but I shall not be so ungallant as to infer that they talk too much. Their tones and looks can render even nonsense agreeable. Words pass through lovely lips like water through a sugared tube.

> " So sweet a language from so fair a mouth—
> Ah ! to what effort would it not persuade !"

" The heavenly rhetoric" of a radiant eye casts a light upon the dullest subject, as the sun turns the dreariest vapours into clouds of gold.

Great talkers amongst the women, independently of their other manifold advantages " 'gainst which the world can ne'er hold argument," are generally superior in sense and shrewdness to the same class amongst the men. If they are not in general very profound or extensive in their views, they observe the lighter characteristics of human nature with a more subtle vision than the sterner sex. Their quickness of observation in small personal matters, their delicate tact, the harmony of their voices, the sweetness of their looks, and the life, grace, and animation diffused over their entire manner, often render their conversation inexpressibly enchanting. I do not of course allude to those who are below the general intellectual standard, or who confine their conversation to frivolous gossip and ill-natured scandal. It would be grossly unjust to characterize the whole sex by such exceptions. Addison and Steele, though they generally affect an air of great gallantry towards the ladies, seem to take rather too much pleasure in exposing the failings of the weakest portion of the sex. ' It has been said," observes a writer in the *Tatler,* " in praise of some men, that they could talk whole hours upon *any*

thing; but it must be owned to the honour of the ladies, that they can talk whole hours together upon *nothing*."* If a clever poem has been written upon "Nothing," why should not female conversation occasionally turn upon it? for the accompaniments of a fair face, bewitching smiles, and oral music are more delightful than even the embellishments of verse. The lively nonsense of an intelligent and lovely woman, who is known to be capable of better things at the proper season, is a most delicious relief to a man exhausted with the toil of thought.

Lord Bacon recommends a slow and cautious mode of speaking in preference to rapid and unceasing rattle. "In all kinds of speech," says he, "either pleasant, grave, severe, or ordinary, it is convenient to speak leisurely, and rather drawlingly than hastily:* because hasty speech confounds the memory, and oftentimes, besides the unseemliness, drives a man either to stammering, a nonplus or harping upon that which should follow; whereas a slow speech confirmeth the memory, addeth a conceit of wisdom to the hearers, besides a seemliness of speech and countenance."

We may not only speak with too great rapidity, but at too much length; and this latter fault is far more intolerable than the former, particularly if the subject be unattractive or unseasonable in itself. An error of this nature betrays a lamentable want of tact and good breeding. A man who possesses the slightest knowledge of life, and is really desirous to please his company, is not likely to weary them with the sound of his own voice, or disgust them with unwelcome topics. He does not run on incessantly without directing his attention to the looks and manners of his hearers, who, if he be neither particularly rich nor powerful, will speedily betray their real feelings. When his best jokes are received with solemn gravity, or met with forced smiles that rapidly disappear like the cold gleams of a winter sun, the fact of his having said rather more than is necessary or agreeable requires no additional illustration. The great art under

such circumstances is to make a sudden stop with grace and spirit, like the halt of a generous steed, and not betray by any uneasy and ungainly movement, the slightest anger, disappointment or confusion. We should be careful not to interrupt others, and should try to make them regret when we have done. There are men who have so little knowledge or reflection, that they imagine they can interest even strangers and mixed companies with minute details of their bodily ailments. They talk as if every hearer were their physician. It is only the most intimate and the warmest friend to whom such conversation can be interesting. But the broadest rebuffs are no check to these egotistical invalids. Their most particular and pathetic narratives are generally interrupted by some trivial remark about the weather, or some careless inquiry about the daily news. Even those, who prompted by a considerate politeness, are most ready to feign an appearance of interest and attention, usually turn their questions rather on the cause than the nature of the complaints. All men are more or less concerned in the origin of disease, because they know not how soon they may be themselves afflicted, and are naturally anxious to guard themselves as much as possible from the ills of others by tracing their causes and the indications of their first approach. But nothing can possibly be less entertaining or agreeable to the generality of hearers, than elaborate disquisitions upon the actual condition of another person's body; and no one whose faculty of observation is not blinded by the most egregious self-love, could fail to remark the indifference or distaste with which such particulars are usually received. Cowper, whose admirable poem on Conversation shall furnish me with a few further illustrations, has described a valetudinarian bore with his wonted humour.

" Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
In making known how often they've been sick,
And give us in recitals of disease
A doctor's trouble, but without the fees;

Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
How an emetic or cathartic sped;
Nothing is slightly touched, much less forgot,
Nose, ears and eyes seem present on the spot.
Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
Victorious seemed, and now the doctor's skill;
And now—alas, for unforeseen mishaps!
They put on a damp night-cap, and relapse;
They thought they must have died, they were so bad;
Their peevish hearers almost wish they had."

A worthy and even talented and well-read man may be very disagreeable in conversation, if he has no knowledge of the world, and is unable to accommodate himself to the taste and the mode of the society into which he happens to be thrown. It requires some tact to know when to speak and in what manner, and when to be silent, or to see how far we may introduce our own favourite subjects. It is generally a mark of imbecility or narrowness of mind when a man is unable to dismount from his *hobby*, or to direct his thoughts into new channels. Some literary men talk as they would write, forgetting that in a private circle they cannot always reckon upon the proper class of hearers, or find them in a congenial mood. We can do what we please with a book. We can take it up when we will, and reject it at other times without offence. It is an unobtrusive companion. But a talker is our master, and has us at a manifest advantage. The rules of society compel us to listen, with a "sad civility." We have but one painful alternative, to be guilty of a species of rudeness which no man can forgive, or to endure the affliction with the best grace we can*. The class of

* Lockhart tells us, that Scott was fond of repeating the following verses of the Dean of St. Patrick, and that Scott himself furnished a happy exemplification of the rules which they embody.

Conversation is but carving,—
Give no more to every guest,
Than he's able to digest;
Give him always of the prime,
And but little at a time;

people I allude to speak much, but converse little. Coleridge was an example. He was a declaimer, a lecturer, a preacher—any thing in fact, but a conversationist. There is little difference in point of character between the monopolists in conversation and those who are utterly taciturn and absent. The first talk with scarcely any reference to their companions, and the others think with the same self-abstraction. The first are active, the others are passive nuisances. In both cases there is a want of respect towards the company. Neither of these offenders would act in the same way in the presence of those whom they greatly fear or regard. Lord Chesterfield has well observed, that it is better to be in the company of a dead man than an absent one, for the former if he gives no pleasure shows no contempt. It is a practical blunder, he adds, to talk to an absent man—you might as well address yourself to a deaf one.

Egotists in conversation are often exceedingly offensive, not so much because we dislike to hear a man speak occasionally of himself, for some men have the power to talk of their own feelings and adventures in a very engaging manner, but because most of them are too apt to engross the whole attention of the company, and to be intolerant of the egotism of others in proportion to the intensity of their own. They who are really more desirous to make themselves agreeable in company than to shine and dazzle, should remember that in proportion to their own obvious exaltation is the depression of their hearers, who are not often generous enough to be delighted with those who force upon them a sense of their own inferiority. They should endeavour to discover whether those whom they converse with are most in want of a listener or a speaker, and it is a good general rule rather to take than to give the tone of the conversation.

Carve to all but just enough,
Let them neither starve nor stuff;
And that you may have your due
Let your neighbours carve for you.

It is above all things necessary to avoid unseasonable topics and allusions. It is injudicious to launch out into flaming descriptions of the happiness, wealth and luxury of our acquaintances in the presence of those who are poor and melancholy, and who consider themselves especially ill-treated by fortune and the world. The comparison which such topics naturally suggest is painful in the extreme, and sometimes occasions a lasting irritation. Neither should we quote Scripture in the company of rakes and drunkards, or swear in the presence of the clergy. As to the use of oaths, which was once esteemed an indication of manliness, it is no longer tolerated in respectable society. It is a practice more honored in the breach than the observance. Fortunately it requires no great exertion of heroism or philosophy to break ourselves of so idle and mean a habit. Archbishop Tillotson has pleasantly observed, that no man can plead in justification of it that he was born of a swearing constitution.

A disposition to contradict and domineer is one of the worst faults of which a talker can be guilty, because the great art of conversation is to make every one in company feel so much at his ease as to be able to express himself with coolness and perspicuity. But an overbearing speaker excites either fear or indignation in all who hear him. At the same time it is necessary to guard against the opposite error of too much civility. Excess in this respect is a characteristic of bad breeding. A clown makes more bows than a courtier.

> "Discourse may want an animated—*No*,
> To brush the surface and to make it flow."

A perfect unison of judgment is unfavorable to conversation. We do not like to talk to mere echoes. "Pray contradict me," said a gentleman, annoyed by the constant and unequivocal assent of his hearer, "if it be only to prove that we are really two persons." To differ in an agreeable manner is the perfection of

good breeding. Cowper has happily described a blustering and positive talker, and the mode in which he should be treated.

> "Vociferated logic kills me quite,
> A noisy man is always in the right:
> I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
> Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
> And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
> Reply discreetly—'To be sure—no doubt.'"

The wit who follows up his anecdote or pun with noisy laughter, and is ever on the watch for double meanings, seizing your smallest phrases as certain animals snap at flies, in fact a mere "word-catcher that lives on syllables," is a heavy check upon all sensible conversation. It is impossible to continue a discussion with any gravity, confidence or feeling, while some one is laying in wait for an expression which he may convert into an equivoque or an epigram. Professed wits always make us serious, though they may prevent us from pursuing the discussion of a serious subject. The best of them must fail so much oftener than they succeed, that, if they are not particularly discreet, they soon weary and annoy their hearers. Even when they do succeed, their listeners have generally either anticipated something still better, or have been so long on the look out, that they are too much exhausted for any real enjoyment. The mood which is necessary to a full relish of a witticism is rarely of long continuance. A succession of surprises decreases in fc.ce at every fresh shock, and the wit that is anticipated loses half its power. The wit that is most effective is that which is least looked for, or that seems naturally suggested and is pertinently applied. It is then a great enlivener of conversation. Even the butt of conversation soon wearies us, unless, like Falstaff, he is witty in himself as well as the cause of wit in others. If he can give as well as take, he affords a delightful treat to those who are merrily inclined. A man of real humour will not make a butt of a mere fool who can give him no play.

A skilful angler only exults in his sport when he has a strong and troublesome fish upon his hook, that puts him on his mettle, and requires all the power of his art. Goldsmith has somewhere very justly observed, that though the company of fools may amuse us for awhile, it never fails to leave us melancholy in the end. Professed wits are generally too ambitious of display to think for a moment of the comfort or disposition of their hearers. I am very far from insisting on an objection to wit and humour, if preserved within reasonable bounds. When introduced in season, and tempered by good taste and good feeling, they constitute very charming embellishments to conversation. Joanna Baillie has given us a good description of a fascinating companion in her tragedy of De Montford.

> "He is so full of pleasant anecdote,
> So rich, so gay, so poignant is his wit,
> Time vanishes before him as he speaks,
> And ruddy morning through the lattice peeps
> Ere night seems well begun."

The following sketch from the hand of Shakspeare, was once applied to Garrick by his friend Mr. Langton. If the application was a just and happy one, as we have every reason to believe, that celebrated actor must have been as delightful in the parlour as on the stage.

> —"A merrier man,
> Within the limits of becoming mirth,
> I never spent an hour's talk withal.
> His eye begets occasion for his wit;
> For every object that the one doth catch,
> The other turns to a mirth-moving jest;
> Which his fair tongue (Conceit's expositor)
> Delivers in such apt and gracious words,
> That aged ears play truant at his tales,
> And younger hearings are quite ravished;
> So sweet and voluble is his discourse."

It is not an easy matter to argue on subjects of deep interest in a calm and methodical manner. An argument is too generally a dispute, and combatants becoming violent and confused supply the place of reason with an excess of anger. At such a moment the best friends are often changed into bitter enemies, for a contemptuous sneer or a severe expression cuts deeper than the sharpest weapon.

Flattery, even when gross, is generally acceptable, because though its sincerity may be doubted, it is certain that the flatterer thinks us worthy of his art. He would not labour to please any one about whose good will or good opinion he was indifferent. We are but too apt to encourage a flatterer, however much we may despise him. But of all compliments, that of deference, implied rather than expressed, is the most delicate and delightful. Its effect is irresistible. When this species of respect is paid to us in the presence of others by a person of respectability and judgment, it is especially agreeable. Lavater has very shrewdly remarked that he should set that man down as an inferior, who would listen to him in a *tête-à-tête*, but contradict him in the presence of a third person.

The *Guardian* recommends it as good policy to prepare ourselves for conversation, by looking further than our neighbours into the reigning subject. This method is not a bad one, though as the writer himself admits, a man coming full charged into company would be eager to unload at all risks, whether he had a handsome opportunity or not. Without exquisite good sense and discretion such a proceeding would involve him in many difficulties, which if he were less ambitious he might easily escape. A memory well stored with personal anecdotes and adventures is a glorious armoury for a talker, if he knows how to handle his weapons. But the worst of this species of triumph is its brevity. The best memory is soon exhausted, and though the anecdote-monger be delightful to new friends he is very

wearisome to old ones. A thrice told tale is an abomination not easily endured. An anecdote or story that is new, brief, and pertinent is of course always agreeable.

"But sedentary weavers of long tales,
Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
'Tis the most asinine employ on earth
To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
And echo conversations dull and dry
Embellished with—'he said,' and 'so said I!'
At every interview their route the same
The repetition makes attention lame;
We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
And in the saddest part cry—'Droll indeed!'"

Johnson observes that Swift told stories with great facility, and delighted in doing what he knew himself to do well; but being captivated by the respectful silence of a steady listener, he told the same tales too often.

Excessive laughter (especially in the wrong place, which it often must be, for it is rarely indeed that there is occasion for its constant repetition) is the mark of great weakness and shallowness of mind. It is very painful to be obliged to return it with a grave look, or to feign a sympathy. But of all nuisances, the practical jokers are the most disgusting. Unhappily it requires so little capital to set up in this line, that there is scarcely a merry company in which one of these humble humourists is not to be met with. Any body can steal your handkerchief, or draw your seat from under you when you have occasion to rise. But such easy tricks are surely beneath the ambition of a gentleman. His groom would at least equal him in similar buffoonery. Such conduct inevitably leads to too much familiarity, and an old proverb may inform us of its ultimate effect. Amongst the greatest sins in conversation is that of scandal. I have been grieved to see how much this vile propensity is encouraged amongst our fair countrywomen in India. This is a sore point, and I content myself with

a bare allusion to it. Its odious nature requires no illustration. The fair sex have generally too much good sense and good feeling not to admit, that to be hated it needs but to be brought to their serious notice, though in their thoughtless and unguarded moments too many of them are apt to indulge in it themselves, and to countenance it in others. But if the ladies sometimes fall into this ungenerous and unworthy practice, the men in this country are but too apt to fall into another still more disgraceful. I have been in the company of men of first-rate talents and acquirements, who seemed to act on the principle of Sir Robert Walpole, who always introduced obscenity into conversation, because he thought it was the only subject which all men could understand, and in which they could be deeply interested without falling into bickerings and disputes. This sentiment is an insult to human nature, and is as false as it is offensive. If I notice these two occasional defects in Indian society, it is not because I have not seen much more in it to commend than to censure. In Calcutta especially, I have heard as refined and intellectual conversation as the most fastidious could desire.

It is generally observed that conversation is not excellent or varied in proportion to the largeness of the company, but that on the contrary it is limited and restrained from more or less of a sense of embarrassment in some speakers, and an eagerness to talk and a desire to shine in others, and the necessity of introducing only those general discussions in which all can join. Any thing approaching to the sentimental, the impassioned or the confidential is quite unseasonable in a large company. Perhaps the most delightful conversation is between two or three individuals of similar pursuits and interests, who agreeing in all broad views differ only on particular points, and who are sufficiently intimate (without being too familiar) to be able to pour forth their genuine feelings and give expression to their inmost thoughts. Conversation is always flat, frivolous and uneasy at

morning visits. The most congenial period for colloquial discourse is after a late dinner, by a cheerful fireside, or at least by candle-light. Such a scene as the following prepares us for a free and cordial interchange of thoughts.

> "Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
> Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
> And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
> Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
> That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each ;
> So let us welcome peaceful evening in."

At such a time the ingenuous heart reveals its eloquent secrets; and the feelings, that in the broad daylight and amid the shock and the hum of strife and business were painfully repressed, gush forth with a charming air of confidence and sincerity. It is in such an hour that men seem most capable of friendship. A spell is upon them, and they forget for a while their worldly coldness and reserve. They no longer act upon a selfish and heart-freezing system, which teaches us to treat our best friends as if they might hereafter become our bitterest enemies.

It is said that neither Pope nor Dryden were good talkers. The latter has told us of himself that he was "saturnine and reserved, and not one of those who endeavour to entertain company by lively sallies of merriment and wit;" and Pope was too conscious of his fame, and too fearful of committing himself. Still the conversation of these eminent men, when they felt themselves perfectly at their ease, and their associates were not unworthy of them, cannot have been otherwise than delightful and instructive. But it is not every day that a literary man can meet with those who are capable of talking with him, or who are fit to listen. "Nothing," says Petrarch, "is so tiresome as to converse with a person who has not the same information as one's self." His biographers tell us that Petrarch was not always sociable, but that the moment he felt disposed to give himself to society, he conversed with

the utmost freedom. "If I seem to my friends," says the poet, "to be a great talker, it is because I see them seldom, and then I talk as much in a day as will compensate for the silence of a year." Mr. Taylor (the author of the humourous poem of *Monsieur Tonson)* says, that Mr. Murphy, the translator of Tacitus, used to frequent a bookseller's shop, the resort of several literary men, for the purpose of listening to Akenside's conversation, while he himself pretended to be reading a book. He said that nothing could be more delightful. Mr. Murphy and the poet never, however, became personally acquainted with each other.

Milton with "a fit audience, though few," was no doubt most instructive and enchanting in conversation. It makes us even exult in our common human nature, when we think "of that celestial colloquy sublime" which he must have held with worthy spirits. Who does not kindle at the thought of the honor and delight which Mr. Lawrence must have felt in being the friend and associate of such a man as Milton? How the following sonnet must have stirred his heart!

TO MR. LAWRENCE.

Lawrence, of virtuous father, virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won
From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice
Of attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

Some of our modern essayists have entered into the question of whether authors or men of the world are the most agreeable and

instructive in conversation. Rousseau has remarked in his *Emilius*, that the conversation of authors is better than their books; and if this be really the case, it must certainly be better than the conversation of the majority of other men, whose table-talk would appear but tame and frivolous in print. The knowledge of literary men is superior in quality to the knowledge of other people, inasmuch as it is not technical and professional, but of universal application. They do not address themselves to lawyers, soldiers or physicians, but to human beings, with a general reference to their common nature. Dr. Johnson's conversation, as recorded by Boswell, has been considered superior to his writings. It was more subtle, animated and pointed than his laboured and formal compositions. Yet, though whatever he said was always worthy of preservation, he was not an agreeable converser. He carried the monarchical principle into conversation, and made himself its representative. He allowed no equality. His hearers were his subjects, and he ruled them with a rod of iron. The utmost they could venture upon was a timid question. Goldsmith wittily and truly applied a passage in one of Cibber's plays to Dr. Johnson. "There is no arguing with Johnson," said he; "for when his pistol misses fire, he knocks his adversary down with the butt end of it." Burke seems to have been the only man who was any thing like a match for him; and so jealous was Johnson of his own supremacy, and so highly did he respect the conversational abilities of his eloquent friend, that on one occasion, when debilitated by sickness, he said of him, "that fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me." Burke was indeed a formidable antagonist, who neither dealt in dogmatisms himself, nor encouraged them in others. There was great shrewdness in the question put by Goldsmith to Boswell, who was too extravagantly praising the conversation of Johnson. "Can he wind into a subject like a serpent, as Burke does?" said the

poet*. Goldsmith himself was generally an indifferent and blundering converser. Horace Walpole called him "an inspired idiot." Garrick said, that

"He wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll."

But he blurted out occasionally many admirable sayings, which would have made the fortune of any other man who did not neutralize their effect with similar failings. His printed compositions are as remarkable for grace and perspicuity as was his conversation for that hurry and confusion which are generally considered characteristic of his countrymen. The most amusing anecdote that we have of his conversation is his singularly infelicitous attempt to repeat a good pun. Some one directed a servant to take a dish of bad-coloured peas to a particular place. When asked his reason for sending them in that direction, he replied that it was the way to *turn 'em green* (Turnham green). Goldsmith, desirous to shine, though in borrowed plumes, endeavoured to repeat the pun in another company. A similar question was put to him. "Oh!" said he, "that is the way to *make* them green." There have been other authors who were as much out of their element in society as Goldsmith, but I still doubt if there are not a greater number of good talkers amongst literary men than are to be found in any other class.

Some artists are delightful talkers. Barry Cornwall (Proctor) represents Haydon's as singularly vivid and picturesque. He had heard him describe Edinburgh in a shower of rain in a way that made it palpably visible to the imagination.

* Charles Butler in his *Reminiscences* thus characterises the conversation of Fox, Pitt, and Burke:—"In familiar conversation, these three great men equally excelled, but even the most intimate friends of Mr. Fox complained of his too frequent ruminating silence. Mr. Pitt talked;—and his talk was fascinating. A good judge said of him, that he was the only person he had known, who possessed the talent of condescension. Yet his loftiness never forsook him; still one might be sooner seduced to take liberties with him than with Mr. Fox. Mr. Burke's conversation was rambling, but splendid, rich and instructive beyond comparison.

Montaigne asserts of himself that he spoke much better than he wrote. If he did, he must have been a divine companion. With such a man "conversing," we might well "forget all time, all seasons and their change."

"His wit
And subtle talk would cheer the winter night,
And make me know myself:—and the fire-light
Would flash upon our faces, till the day
Might dawn, and make me wonder at my stay."
Julian and Maddalo.

Beattie was delighted with the conversation of Gray. "He was happy," he observes, "in a singular facility of expression. His conversation abounded in original observations, delivered with no appearance of sententious formality, and seeming to arise spontaneously without study or premeditation."

The conversation of authors, says Hazlitt, is not so good as might be imagined, but such as it is (and with rare exceptions) it is better than any other. His own was acute, original, and profound. He "threw a light as from a painted window" on the dreariest subject, and untwisted the knot of a complicated argument with a magical dexterity. His delivery was sometimes difficult and irregular, but his matter was so rich that his companions could well afford to overlook the manner. If they could think at all, he charmed them as with a spell, and when he was once thoroughly interested in some important subject, his eloquent words flowed as rapidly as his thoughts, and he gave his hearers good reason to exclaim,

How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute.

He has well described the conversation and manner of his friend Leigh Hunt. "Hunt has a fine vinous spirit about him. He sits at the head of a party with great gaiety and grace; has an elegant manner and turn of features; has continual sportive sallies

of wit or fancy; tells a story capitally: mimics an actor or an acquaintance to admiration; laughs with great glee and good humour at his own and other people's jokes: understands the point of an equivoque or an observation immediately; has a taste for, and knowledge of, books, of music, of medals; manages an argument adroitly; is genteel and gallant, and has a set of bye-phrases and quaint allusions always at hand to produce a laugh." Shelley has described Leigh Hunt in a poetical epistle.

> "You will see H—t; one of those happy souls
> Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom
> This world would smell like what it is—a tomb;
> Who is, what others seem;—his room no doubt
> Is still adorned by many a cast from Shout,
> With graceful flowers tastefully placed about;
> And coronals of bay from ribbands hung,
> And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung."

Keats has also done due honor to Leigh Hunt's refined yet frank and social conversation.

> "*He who elegantly chats and talks,*
> *The wronged Libertas*—who has told you stories
> Of laurel chaplets and Apollo's glories,
> Of troops chivalrous marching through a city,
> And tearful ladies made for love and pity."

Wordsworth is said to be an eloquent and instructive talker, especially on poetical subjects. He is not however fond of mere gossip, as may be gathered from the following very curious sonnet.

> "I am not one who much or oft delight
> To season my fireside with personal talk
> Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
> Of neighbours, daily, weekly in my sight:
> And for my chance acquaintance, Ladies bright,
> Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
> These all wear out of me, like forms, with chalk
> Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast night.

Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence square with my desire:
To sit without emotion, hope or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint under-song."

It is said of Charles Lamb, in the Plain-Speaker, that he is "the most delightful, the most provoking, the most witty and sensible of men. He always makes the best pun and the best remark in the course of the evening. His serious conversation, like his serious writing, is his best. No one ever stammered out such fine, piquant, deep, eloquent things in half a dozen half sentences as he does." Horne Tooke was a master of the intellectual foils; so were Dr. Parr and Professor Porson. Sir Walter Scott was *narrative* and entertaining, but I suspect he did not shine in wit or argument. Thomas Campbell's conversation is that of a scholar, a poet and a warm-hearted man. "He is one of the few," says Leigh Hunt, "with whom I could at any time walk a dozen miles through the snow to spend an afternoon." Rogers, according to the testimony of Lord Byron, is silent and severe; but when he does talk, he talks well, and on all subjects of taste, his delicacy of expression is pure as his poetry. Moore's conversation is also as brilliant as his verses. Byron's was unequal, but occasionally spirited and delightful. It would be easy to extend this list of authors who have excelled in colloquial intercourse, and it would be equally easy to adduce a number of striking exceptions*. But this article is already too long, and I must

* "Mr. Hume's writings were so superior to his conversation, that I frequently said he understood nothing till he had written upon it."—*Horace Walpole.*

"If I am obliged to speak I infallibly talk nonsense. What is still worse, instead of learning to be silent, when I have absolutely nothing to say, it is generally at such times that I have a violent inclination for talking; and endeavouring to pay my debt of conversation as speedily as possible, I hastily gabble a number of words without ideas, happy when they only chance to mean nothing: thus endeavouring to conquer or hide my incapacity, I rarely fail to show it."—*Rousseau's Confessions.*

content myself with adding, that the best proof of the general superiority of the conversation of authors is the fact already alluded to, that it would in most instances bear to be recorded in a book, which is not the case with the conversation of other men, who, though they may seem to talk with considerable brilliancy, would very rarely. have occasion to congratulate themselves on the appearance of their Table Talk in a printed form.

SONNET.

There are no mortal limits to the sway
That God hath given the spirit, of this frame
The tenant, not the prisoner. Nought can tame
Her sovereign will. She mocks at human clay,
The dim weak wall that seemeth like a stay ;—
So the fair moon that envious night would shame,
And shroud her form divine, out-bursts like flame
From smouldering fires, and brightens on her way!
The forehead pale, despite its ivory bound,
As glass is fragile, and the eye as clear,
When the roused soul awakes. The scenes around
Her worldly path—hills, vales, and woods,—appear
Her realm no more. She soars from earth's low ground,
And seeks, on viewless wings, a holier sphere.

LINES TO A LADY SINGING.

A voice divine is echoing in my heart—
The tears are in mine eyes ;—oh ! never, never
Did holier tones from worldly cares dissever
The dreamer's soul ! I feel myself depart
From life's dim land. Enchantress as thou art,
Oh ! that thy magic spells could last for ever !
But bliss eternal owns no mortal giver :—
The song hath ceased !—I wake with sudden start,
Like one half-sleeping on a murmuring river,
When the bark strikes the shore :—the trance is broken !

Hark !—sweeter sounds than aught e'er sung or spoken
By human lips before, (a seraph's strain,)
Like floral fragrance from a breeze-stirred bower,
Float on the ravished atmosphere again !
Oh exquisite excess ! Oh ! tones too sweet
For mortal ear with tranquil nerve to meet ;
The sense is almost troubled with your power.
Yet cease not—cease not—rain upon my heart,
Ye showers of song, and drown each thought in bliss
As wild and wanton as the first sweet kiss
Wakes in the lover's brain !

As glad birds dart
Through earth's dull mist, and cleaving sunnier air,
Send down their liquid notes from fields of light,
So thou, fair Minstrel, seem'st from regions bright
To breathe celestial hymns ! Thy music rare
Like matin songs that cheer departing night,

While charmed Aurora stealeth o'er the height
Of orient hills, would chase the hideous gloom
Of desolate hearts wild-struggling with despair,
And frightened Hope recal!

More sweet than bloom
Of vernal bowers to desert-wearied eyes,
And sweeter than the sudden sound of streams
That sun-parched wanderers hear with glad surprise,
Is thy melodious magic to the breast
That Care hath haunted with her cloud-like dreams,
Or passion stirred to madness. Peace and rest
Attend thy voice, thus potent as a word
From sacred lips when earthly hopes decline;
Or as those visionary notes divine
Rapt Mirza on the hills of Bagdat heard!

THE VOICE OF LOVE.

Oh! if there is a magic charm, amid this desert drear,
The long, dull, weary way to cheat—our darkest dreams to cheer,
It is the tender voice of Love, that echoes o'er the mind
Like music on a twilight lake, or bells upon the wind!

Oh! dread would be the rugged road, and sad the wanderer's heart,
Should that celestial harmony from life's dim sphere depart!
Oh! how, for that far distant land, would sigh the lonely breast,
'Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest!'

LONDON, IN THE MORNING.

THE morning wakes, and through the misty air
In sickly radiance struggles—like the dream
Of sorrow-shrouded hope. O'er Thames' dull stream,
Whose sluggish waves a wealthy burden bear
From every port and clime, the pallid glare
Of early sun-light spreads. The long streets seem
Unpeopled now, but soon each path shall teem
With hurried feet, and visages of care;
And eager throngs shall meet where dusky marts
Resound like ocean-caverns, with the din
Of toil and strife and agony and sin.
Trade's busy Babel! Ah! how many hearts
By lust of gold to thy dim temples brought
In happier hours have scorned the prize they sought!

VIEW OF CALCUTTA.

HERE Passion's restless eye and spirit rude
May greet no kindred images of power
To fear or wonder ministrant.—No tower,
Time-struck and tenantless, here seems to brood,
In the dread majesty of solitude,
O'er human pride departed—no rocks lower
O'er ravenous billows—no vast hollow wood
Rings with the lion's thunder—no dark bower
The crouching tiger haunts—no gloomy cave
Glitters with savage eyes!—But all the scene
Is calm and cheerful. At the mild command
Of Britain's sons, the skilful and the brave,
Fair Palace-structures decorate the land,
And proud ships float on Hooghly's breast serene!

SIR EGERTON BRYDGES*.

For half a century Sir Egerton Brydges has struggled to obtain a name in Literature. His success has not been in proportion to the length and earnestness of his labour. It is only to those who follow literature as a profession, and the few readers who, not satisfied to confine themselves to an acquaintance with the idols of the public, keep an eye upon all who have any claims whatever to the honors of authorship, that the reputation and the works of Sir Egerton Brydges are at all familiar. No living writer who has been equally industrious and prolific has excited so little general notice. The books that he has written, edited or compiled amount to about *sixty volumes!* When to these are added his contributions to almost every kind of review and magazine, one is naturally surprised at the extent of his labours and the obscurity of his name. If his accomplishments were superficial, or his learning abstruse—or if his style were dull and his subjects unpopular, it would be more easy to account for the neglect that he has experienced. But his characteristics are the reverse of these. His manner is always lively; his knowledge is elegant and extensive, rather than profound; and he has often handled topics of general interest with energy and truth. He has never opposed the stream of popular opinion. During the rage for poetry from the time of Cowper to Byron, he courted the Muses with toil and ardour; and when

* This article was written after the perusal of the work entitled "The Autobiography, Times, Opinions, and Contemporaries of Sir Egerton Brydges, Bart. (per legem terræ) Baron Chandos of Sudely, &c."

the Minerva Press was the fashionable emporium for sentimental and romantic prose fictions, Sir Egerton supplied the public with novels adapted to the prevailing taste. His Sonnets, though published at a time when that form of composition was extremely fashionable, and when those of Charlotte Smith were running rapidly through new and large editions, attracted but very slight attention; while his novels of *Mary de Clifford* and *Fitz-Albini* were equally unfortunate. The "Letters on the Character and Poetical Genius of Lord Byron," published in one volume octavo, in 1824, the year of the poet's death, were perhaps more successful than any of his previous works; but even these made no deep or lasting impression on the public mind, though the subject and the style were of a highly popular nature. Mr. Moore speaks very respectfully of these letters; and observes, that "they contain many just and striking views." Lord Byron himself had a favorable opinion of the talents of Sir Egerton Brydges, and made the following entry in his journal—"Redde the *Ruminator*—a collection of Essays, by a strange but able old man (Sir E. B.)." This "strange but able old man" seems to have met with more kindness and respect from eminent individuals than from the public. He congratulates himself on the good opinion of Wordsworth and Southey, and he has just reason to do so. Of the precise nature of Wordsworth's praise we are not afforded the means of judging; but there are some passages in the two or three beautiful letters from Southey which, whether with or without his consent, Sir Egerton has published at full length, that must have afforded him the most exquisite gratification. I do not wonder at his eagerness to print them; for, as far as individual testimony extends, they are extremely valuable. The public, however, are, after all, the final and the least fallible judges of literary merit. Their last and deliberate decisions are almost always right, and have an authority far superior to that of any individual, however eminent. Byron's contempt for Spenser, and his estimation of Pope above

all other English poets, and his inscription of the name of Rogers at the top of a literary pyramid of contemporary poets, and of Wordsworth, of Coleridge, and of Southey, nearly at the base, has had no influence whatever on the general judgment respecting the relative merits of these poets, though it may have called into question his own candour or acumen. Neither has Coleridge's enthusiastic admiration of the sonnets of Bowles, or Hazlitt's over-praise of those of Warton affected in the slightest degree the decisions of the public. The former are generally acknowledged to be delicate and harmonious, but querulous and feeble; and the latter refined and thoughtful, but too intricate and pedantic. These opinions of the majority of readers, are undoubtedly more moderate and just than those of Hazlitt and Coleridge, who were influenced in this case by accidental associations. If the voice of a great poet were the voice of fame, Cowper would have bestowed immortality on the name of Hayley. Even Southey's generous praise of him in the *Quarterly Review* will not save him from oblivion*. It is true that there are passages in literary history which seem to prove the uncertainty of the public mind. That it exhibits occasional obliquities of taste, and is unduly influenced by temporary causes, is not to be denied; but these faults are neither so frequent nor so remarkable as the prejudices and caprices of individuals. It is pretty clear, we think, that there has been no truly great poet respecting whose character the public has committed any serious mistake, whatever may have been the sentiments of a few individuals. It is said that the poetry of Milton was for many years neglected. In opposition to this opinion it may be asserted that he had as many readers as could have been fairly expected, considering the time he wrote and the character of his

* The very beautiful though too laudatory article here alluded to, was almost refused insertion by Mr. Gifford; and Southey has confessed that if it had been positively rejected, it would have alienated him from the Review.

poetry. It is to be remembered also that a general sense of Milton's merit might precede his popularity. In fact, he is not yet, and perhaps never will be, a popular poet; though all men acknowledge him to be a great one. Goldsmith is at this day more generally read than Milton: but those who read Goldsmith more than Milton make no mistake about the respective merits of these writers. They merely show that they prefer tenderness to sublimity, or that they can enjoy for a longer period or with greater frequency or a more congenial feeling those strokes of genius that stir the gentler emotions of the heart, than those empyreal flights of the imagination which require the strained and unflagging attention of the mind. But that Milton's genius is of a higher order than that of Goldsmith, is universally understood, and the greater popularity of the latter is no argument whatever against the public judgment. The one has a more extensive popularity, the other has a higher fame.

The lately published auto-biography of Sir Egerton Brydges would afford Mr. D'Israeli an interesting subject for an additional chapter to his Essay on the Literary Character. For the mere lovers of personal gossip and light reading the work has comparatively few attractions; for nothing can be more slight, capricious, and unsatisfactory, than the biographical anecdotes and details, and the mode in which they are recorded. It is a psychological, not a personal memoir. The author has given us his thoughts and opinions, but not his life. The only incident in his personal career that he has dwelt upon at any length, is the rejection of his claim to the right of a peerage; and even this portion of his work is much less narrative than reflective. The circumstances of the case are given in a very brief space, but the effect of this disappointment on his mind and character may be traced from his first page to his last; and it is difficult to say whether his life has been most embittered by his failure in the Temple of the Muses, or in the House of Lords. The main pur-

port of his autobiography is to prove that he has been unjustly treated by the nobility and the public, and that notwithstanding the opposition he has met with in both capacities, he is entitled to be recognized as a peer and a poet of a high order. He is so thoroughly blinded by pride and passion, that, like Rousseau, he thinks the whole world is in a conspiracy against him. The unfavourable decision of the Lords and the severity of the critics are alike attributed to jealousy and hatred. His disappointed ambition has excited a burning fever in his soul that the grave alone may cure. "Who can administer to a mind diseased?" It is painful to observe the inconsistencies into which this able but unhappy man is continually betrayed by the conflict between his reason and his passions. While he expresses with a solemn earnestness his contempt for rank and fame, he unconsciously betrays how bitterly he feels the want of them; and every complaining word is steeped in the blood of a wounded heart. But though he gives vent in the plainest terms to his jealousy of the modern nobility, and styles them "insolent *parvenus*," his notices of his more fortunate poetical contemporaries are always liberal and judicious. Even their popularity is accounted for in a manner that is equally just to them and to their admirers. It is only in his own particular case that his judgment fails him, when he unconsciously exaggerates the value of his own poetry, and unjustly censures the critics or the public for their hostility or indifference. He is a more daring egotist than Rousseau or Montaigne. He is sometimes, too, almost as eloquent as the former, and is always quite as rambling and irregular as the latter. He dwells, however, less upon little personal incidents than either. His adventures are only adventures of the heart and mind, that are laid open with an unsparing hand, and all their sore places unblushingly displayed. Nothing but the most consummate vanity and the desperate energies of a repressed ambition could have led any man to put forth

such a fearful revelation*. The world, however, will be a gainer by the author's boldness. A more interesting though painful picture—a more instructive lesson is rarely met with. The evil consequences of overrating our talents, and of encouraging a wild ambition and a morbid sensibility are illustrated by this unfortunate painter of his own portrait, with a force and truth that cannot fail to leave a deep impression upon every thoughtful mind.

Generally speaking, though there are many exceptions to the rule, egotism and vanity are unfavourable signs. It is the want of knowledge that makes us vain. The profoundest spirits are often the humblest. Newton compared himself to a child gathering pebbles on the sea-shore. The farther we advance, the longer appears our road; for the more we see before us,

"Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise."

The perusal of superior books has not the same humbling effect as the meeting with superior men. A book is a kind of abstraction, but a personal contact with our betters occasions that strong sense of inferiority which is so painful to little minds and so useful to noble ones. The anxiety which some people evince to escape from such uncongenial company, and their bitter humiliation and restless discontent until restored to their own little circle of admirers,

* Sir Egerton Brydges is a very reserved man in society. It is strange how easily men who are shy in private, run into a bold egotism in public. They who are much in the habit of addressing the public acquire a confidence of success, and fall into a degree of familiarity with their thousands of unseen and unknown readers, that is quite unaccountable to those who have confined themselves to the intercourse of private life. It is like uttering impudent or foolish things in a dark room. No rebuking eye kindles a painful blush upon the speaker's cheek. The author and the public do not meet face to face. The former sends out his oracles or his egotisms from the concealment of his quiet study. The late William Hazlitt was a striking illustration of the strange contrast which a person may present between his public and his private manners. He was a bold and egotistical author, but a shy man. In addressing the whole world, he was often daring and dogmatical; but in a small private company, if any strangers were present, he could scarcely muster up sufficient courage to go through the ordinary ceremonies of social intercourse.

is an illustration of this remark. A library is not so great a check on our self-approbation, though adorned even with a Milton and a Shakspeare! In minds, indeed, duly chastened and subdued by extensive study, a work of true genius will always excite a reverent admiration; but I am now alluding to its effects on those writers and readers who possess but a superficial knowledge of literature and life. They who are apt to talk flippantly and even to think lightly of books, are brought to their own level in the presence of living genius.

Sir Egerton Brydges had unfortunately the temperament of genius without its power, and for the want of that self-knowledge without which we cannot turn the talents and acquirements we may possess to any real advantage, he has passed a life of misery and discontent. He has inherited an ample fortune, he is the representative of one of the highest and most ancient families in the kingdom, his powers of mind and his literary accomplishments are of no ordinary character, (though immeasurably overrated by himself,) and he has had books and leisure at his command; yet with all these means and appliances he has done but little for his fame, and still less for his happiness. If he had devoted his whole energies to some single and noble purpose, instead of dissipating his time and talents on unconnected and comparatively trifling objects, he might have won to himself a far higher name in literature than he has yet acquired. Though he has poetical feelings, he is not a poet, and has fallen into the too common mistake of confounding a mere attachment for the Muses with an actual inspiration. But he who loves poetry is not necessarily a poet, any more than a lover of music is necessarily a musician. This was the grand error of his literary life. It is his failure as a poet that has poisoned all his pleasures. If he could have forsworn verse, and have devoted himself exclusively to any other department of literature, he would have saved himself many bitter disappointments, and have occupied a more respectable station among his

literary contemporaries. His works are occasionally characterised by such ingenious thoughts, such noble feelings, and such a fervid eloquence, that it is impossible to resist the impression that he was meant for higher tasks than he has yet attempted. His failures, however, are to be attributed to very different causes from those assigned by himself. His want of success was not owing to the "want of cheers," as he quaintly expresses it; but to the self-mistake already alluded to, and to the irregularity and capriciousness of his literary labours. It was not Sir Egerton Brydges in his personal character, but in his character as an author, that the public ever thought of him at all; and it is a great error to suppose that they are prejudiced judges of literary merit. If he had written any thing really worthy of general notice, he would undoubtedly have obtained it. Genius has no occasion to be mute and inglorious in these times. A follower of the Muses has now a much greater chance of over-praise than unjust censure.

Sir Egerton Brydges "lisped in numbers." It is a pity that his mind took this turn so early. It were to be wished that young students would direct their attention more frequently to prose, though it is natural enough that they should take in the first instance to a kind of composition apparently so easy, though in reality so difficult. Their ears are captivated with the sweet sound of verse, and their minds are not always sufficiently critical to distinguish words from sense—the leaves from the fruit. Even persons of tolerable sagacity, and who can observe the shallowness of a florid and feeble prose style, are often found to surrender judgment hoodwinked in reading verse, and *especially if it be their own.* It is astonishing what mere inanities have satisfied the self-conceit of writers of verse, who would have been heartily ashamed of the same emptiness in their prose. So long as the words run smoothly and the rhymes are correct, there is something like an air of completeness and a vague elevation in metrical composition that are exceedingly delusive. There are certain words also the

common property of verse-writers, that often suggest poetical associations for which the reader is more indebted to his own imagination than to the genius of the author. These pretty external ornaments are often worn by a poetaster who is as ignorant of the effect he produces as the unconscious fish that makes its gold and silver scales to glitter in the sunny water. It is the ease with which vulgar writers can put on the costume of the Muse that has brought her spirit into contempt, amongst men who do not sufficiently discriminate between harmonious and pretty verse and genuine poetry. Thus Jeremy Bentham, perceiving how easy it is for people to put common thoughts into correct rhyme, and of what miserable stuff the great mass of verse generally consists, jumped at once to the conclusion, that poetry was a trifling amusement, unfit for grown men, and less useful than the game of push-pin! He forgot Homer and Shakspeare and Dante and Milton, and recollected only the small fry of small poetasters. But to judge fairly of an art we should not estimate its claims by an exclusive reference to the works of its unsuccessful votaries. The rarity of great poets only proves the difficulty and dignity of their art,—the same also is proved by the glaring ill success of the countless host of verse-writers, who might have attained to perfection in any other human accomplishment with the same zeal and labour. Hayley, a learned, elegant and sensible person, spent nearly half a century in the study and practice of poetry; but amongst his thousands of correct and harmonious verses he has not left us a single line that is breathed upon by the Muse. Nature had denied him that peculiar quality without which no man can produce genuine poetry, however great may be his learning, his industry, his zeal, or his general intellectual power. We should always, therefore, feel some hesitation in encouraging young persons to write verse. It is not to be denied that the practice of versifying is an elegant amusement, and well calculated to familiarize a young student with the language in which he

writes; but there is the serious danger that a fatal facility in the production of verse may lead to a long and unrequited courtship of the Muse, and withhold a man from pursuits that are more profitable and better adapted to his capacity. Nothing is more unfortunate or more to be lamented than such a misdirection of intellect and labour. How many individuals are there who, though contemptible as poets, might have risen to distinction in almost any other walk of life! The world is too apt to judge decidedly of a man's general powers by his failure in some particular department of human knowledge, without a due consideration of his capacity for other studies. Thus a man who has written bad poetry is thought unfit for every thing, and has sunk his reputation for ever. He cannot hope to be regarded as an able man, until people forget that he has committed the sin of rhyme; and this oblivion he is generally the last to desire or to anticipate. Men who are in reality greatly his inferiors, but who have been more fortunate in hitting upon a congenial and profitable pursuit in life, seem privileged to speak of him with a mixture of pity and contempt. The style in which the most vulgar persons speak of all authors who are not in the very highest rank is justly rebuked in a little collection of "Essays from the French of the Abbot Trublet," a book that well rewards perusal. In the course of some remarks on criticism, this French Essayist thus alludes to the despisers of the lesser literati.

"The middling sort of writers are common enough in the world of authors; *but men capable of making middling writers are very scarce among men in general;* even among those who think they have pretensions to genius and learning.

"A writer of this sort is a person of but moderate genius, compared with men of the first rank; but is often a considerable one, compared with the greatest part of those that take upon them to judge him with so much pride and severity. Methinks, I could say to this insolent race of men; ah! gentlemen, let me beseech you, do but think of the mischief you do yourselves, by this imperious manner of criticism: these contemptuous airs: this magisterial tone in which you deliver yourselves! The persons you set so low are infinitely your superiors."

Sir Egerton commends his own sonnets for their severe simplicity of style, and flatters himself that in this respect he has rightly followed the example of Milton. Milton's style is in keeping with his thoughts. An ornate and effeminate phraseology would have been almost as unsuited to the energy and grandeur of that mighty poet as to the Holy Scriptures, the sublimity of which would be greatly injured by the introduction of flowery epithets and elaborate metaphors from the store-house of modern poetry. It is doubtful whether the plain language of Milton's sonnets would ever be tolerated in the productions of a feebler writer. The simplicity of Milton's style is grand, because it is associated with gigantic power. Poets should choose a subject and a style adapted to their genius. If Moore were to throw away his gems and flowers, and attempt the severer manner of Milton, perhaps his verses would be as worthless as they are now delightful. The nakedness of Milton's Muse is the nakedness of a classical statue.

The sonnets of Sir Egerton Brydges (with one exception) are cold and unpoetical. The thoughts are as prosaic as the style. His sonnet entitled "*Echo and Silence*" is so immeasurably superior to all the rest, that it is a proof how much reliance is placed upon his honor that people take his word for it when he claims it as his own. It was for some time attributed to Henry Brooke (author of *Gustavus Vasa*) until in 1825, Sir Egerton inserted in it his *Recollections of Foreign Travel.* Southey has said that he knows not any poem in any language more beautifully imaginative. If, as Dr. Johnson said of Gray, in reference to his Elegy, the author had often written thus, it would have been vain to blame and useless to praise him.

ECHO AND SILENCE.

In eddying course when leaves began to fly,
And Autumn in her lap the store to strew,
As mid wild scenes I chanced the Muse to woo
Through glens untrod and woods that frowned on high,

Two sleeping nymphs with wonder mute I spy ;
And, lo, she's gone !—In robe of dark green hue,
'Twas Echo from her sister Silence flew,
For quick the hunter's horn resounded to the sky !
In shade affrighted Silence melts away.
Not so her sister.—Hark ! for onward still
With far-heard step she takes her listening way,
Bounding from rock to rock, and hill to hill.
Ah, mark the merry maid in mockful play
With thousand mimic tones the laughing forest fill !

The classical and accomplished Archdeacon Wrangham has honored this sonnet with a Latin translation. The following reflections on his birth-day, may be given as a fair specimen of Sir Egerton's *general* style ; and I select this sonnet, because it is immediately followed in his auto-biography by the writer's remark, that he had studiously attempted to imitate the simplicity of Milton, and had adopted the same stern system of the rejection of flowery language.

SONNET.—*30th November.*

This thy last day, dark month, to me is dear,
For this first saw mine infant eyes unbound ;
Now two-and-twenty years have hastened round,
Yet from the bud no ripened fruits appear!
My drooping spirits at the thought to cheer,
By my fond friends the jovial bowl is crowned,
While sad I sit, my eyes upon the ground,
And scarce refrain to drop the silent tear !
Yet, O beloved Muse ! if in me glow
Ambition for false fame, the thirst abate ;
Teach me for fields and flocks mankind to know,
And ope my eyes to all that's truly great ;
To view the world unmasked on me bestow,
And knaves and fools to scorn, howe'er adorned by state !

The sonnet previously quoted *(Echo and Silence)* is entitled to all the praise it has obtained. It is truly poetical. But as the author never approached its excellence on any other occasion, his readers are compelled to conclude that it was suggested by one of

those sudden flashes of inspiration which once or twice in the course of a man's whole life may enable him, if I may use a common expression, to surpass himself. If the poem had been a longer one, this hypothesis would be quite unfair, because casual felicities of this nature will not give life and animation to a sustained effort, nor even to a succession of shorter pieces. Sir Egerton has been writing sonnets nearly all his life, but the Muse, with this one exception, has always frowned upon his best endeavours.

Turning, however, from the verse of this writer to his prose, we are presented with numerous evidences of great natural talent and of very elegant and extensive acquirements. I repeat my opinion, that if he had concentrated his powers upon some worthy undertaking, he would have been far better known and more highly esteemed as a literary man than he now is, though he has been labouring in the fields of literature, capriciously and irregularly, for so long a period.

Sir Egerton Brydges is now in his seventy-fifth year, and it is pleasing to find a literary man at his time of life writing with such unabated vigour, animation, and enthusiasm. If he has the garrulity of age, he has not its feebleness. He has not yet reached, and I hope he never will reach, the last of the Seven Ages*.

* Since the first edition of this book Sir Egerton Brydges has paid the debt of nature.

STANZAS,

ON THE DEATH OF A GENERAL OFFICER IN INDIA.

The years of vanished life
The gun's loud voice hath told—
The breast that dared the battle-strife
Is motionless and cold!

The muffled drum's dull moan,
Sad requiem of the brave,
Awoke the deep responsive groan
Above that warrior's grave.

He lies on his dark bed,
With cold unconscious brow;
For sleep's eternal spell is spread
Around his pillow now.

Behold the crimson sky,
And mark yon setting sun;
For, like that orb, once bright on high,
Was *he* whose race is run!

A few short moments' flight
Hath wildly changed his doom;
The worm shall be his mate to-night—
His home, the cheerless tomb!

The midnight blast shall howl—
  The dews his cold limbs steep—
The jackal shriek, the wild dog growl—
  Nor wake his dreamless sleep!

Yet vain the dirge of woe,
  Where mortal relics rest,—
His earth-freed spirit triumphs now,
  In regions of the blest!

SONNET—THE SUTTEE.

Her last fond wishes breathed, a farewell smile
  Is lingering on the calm unclouded brow
  Of yon deluded victim. Firmly now
She mounts, with dauntless mien, the funeral pile
Where lies her earthly lord. The Brahmin's guile
  Hath wrought its will—fraternal hands bestow
  The quick death-flame—the crackling embers glow-
And flakes of hideous smoke the skies defile!
  The ruthless throng their ready aid supply,
And pour the kindling oil. The stunning sound
  Of dissonant drums—the priest's exulting cry—
The failing martyr's pleading voice have drowned;
While fiercely-burning rafters fall around,
  And shroud her frame from horror's straining eye!

STANZAS.

I.

THE brighter hours of life are past,
The sun of hope is set:
Though its lingering beam as it glowed its last
Woke a tear of too fond regret;
It hath left a solemn twilight sadness,
I would not change for the glare of gladness.

II.

I've known the weary weight of grief,
The throb of wild despair;
Though hushed is the tone that would breathe relief,
And the sigh that my pang would share—
Though the breast is cold—the voice departed—
They haunt the dreams of the lonely-hearted.

III.

I linger in the stranger's land—
I share the stranger's bowl—
Yet the thought of his own dear native land
Is a star to the wanderer's soul;
And of Memory's chain—Love's farewell token—
Each hallowed link hath remained unbroken.

ON THE ART OF READING.

I WAS lately dipping into "A Catalogue of Five Hundred celebrated Living Authors of Great Britain*," published in 1788, and on coming to the article on Anna Seward, was struck with the singularity of one of the points of commendation. She is described as "a lady of considerable accomplishments, beautiful in her person, lively and entertaining in her conversation, and *celebrated for her great excellence in the art of reading.*" The mention of Miss Seward's poetry follows as a secondary matter; and indeed if she had not read poetry better than she wrote it, she would scarcely have merited such particular praise. Not that her poetry was invariably bad. Some of her sonnets have both beauty of thought and harmony of metre, though I fear that the world will "willingly let them die." In fact they are almost forgotten already. There are lines in them, however, that deserve to live. The following is an example. It finely represents the heat and stillness of a summer noon.

"And sultry silence brooded o'er the hills."

The following Stanza on the dog in a wild state, is taken from her poem on the "Future Existence of Brutes."

"When unattached, and yet to man unknown,
Wolfish and wild, the wilderness he roves,
Bays with his horrid howl, the silent moon,
And stalks the terror of the desert groves."

The following couplet is pretty and picturesque:—

"And tossing the green sea-weed o'er and o'er
Creeps the hushed billow on the shelly shore."

* I have a vague recollection that Lord Byron once noticed and laughed at this book, being much amused at the notion of there being at any time in one country 500 celebrated living writers.

Her description of a winter morning is extremely true.

"I love to rise ere gleams the tardy light,
Winter's pale dawn:— and as warm fires illume
And cheerful tapers shine around the room,
Through misty windows bend my musing sight,
Where, round the dusky lawn, the mansions white,
With shutters closed, peer faintly through the gloom,
That slow recedes, while yon gray spires assume,
Rising from their dark pile, an added height
By indistinctness given."

Miss Seward's poetry is sometimes florid and affected, and a great deal more attention seems paid to the expression and the sound than to the sentiments. She was admired, however, as a poetess and esteemed as a friend by Darwin and Hayley, and even Sir Walter Scott and the learned Dr. Parr. Sir Egerton Brydges fancies that the hand of Darwin is to be traced in many of her early poems. I think not She was too self-satisfied to receive such assistance. The querulous and passionate strain of her correspondence with Henry Hardinge, who occasionally ventured to suggest improvements in her verses and to differ with her on certain points of poetical criticism, shows that she was not easily led by the advice or influenced by the judgment of others. Darwin, in fact, is more indebted to her than she was to him, for he is known to have used some lines of her composition as the introduction to his "Botanic Garden," and that without any acknowledgment.

As to Miss Seward's posthumous letters, which in obedience to her last will were edited by Sir Walter Scott, they are certainly the most artificial compositions of the kind in the English language, though they are at the same time amongst the most amusing, on account of their poetical criticisms and their literary anecdotes.

Nothing, however, can be more ludicrous than her extravagant admiration of the circle of Lilliputian poets, by whom she was surrounded. I do not allude to Hayley and Darwin, for though now out of fashion they were really eminent men in their day; but to

that little clan of versifiers whose very names are now forgotten, though their productions, according to Anna's friendly predictions, were to last with the language. It was because Hardinge would not admire these sprats of Helicon that she was so exasperated at what she called his want of candour. What most surprises us, in the midst of her violent eulogies, is the quickness and accuracy of her microscopic eye in picking out the minutest beauties of these small writers. It is true that she always exaggerates the value of her discoveries to a most unconscionable extent; but she exhibits at the same time the nicest judgment in selection. If a critic of the severest taste were compelled to praise the same writers, he would inevitably fix upon the same passages for commendation. This seems to show extreme partiality rather than a want of critical acumen. Many of her remarks upon Milton are exceedingly judicious, and she enthusiastically maintained his claim to be considered a richly harmonious poet, when it was the fashion to pronounce his versification harsh and unpleasing.

Miss Seward's success as a reader argues her possession of a great delicacy of ear and quickness of apprehension, for without these qualities it is impossible she could have recited Shakspeare and Milton with even tolerable effect. If her reputation as a reader was well founded, and there is no reason to doubt that it was so, we need not wonder at the earnest entreaties of her friends (which she mentions in her letters) for the repeated exercise of her talent for recitation; for nothing is more delightful than to hear fine poetry delivered by a reader perfectly equal to the task.

It is assumed that poets, from their peculiar sensibility to the beauties of verse and their more intimate familiarity with its harmonies, are better readers of poetry than other men. This is *generally* the case, but not *always*. A man may write very harmonious verses, and yet be quite unable to do them justice by an accurate and pleasing recitation. Goldsmith once remarked in company, that poets were more likely to read verses well than other

men; but when he was called on to illustrate his remark by his own performance, he repeated a stanza of a ballad with such false emphasis that he was condemned by all present.

Davies, in his life of Garrick, tells us, that when Glover read his *Boadicea* to the actors, his voice was so harsh, and his elocution so disagreeable, that he disgusted his auditors. Garrick politely offered to read it for him; but Glover declined the favour, and appeared to think that he acquitted himself extremely well*. Corneille, Dryden, Addison, Akenside and Thomson were wretched readers. Of the latter, Dr. Johnson remarks, that "among his peculiarities was a very unskilful and inarticulate manner of pronouncing any lofty or solemn composition. He was once reading to Doddington, who being himself a reader eminently elegant, was so much provoked by his odd utterance, that he snatched the paper from his hands, and told him

* Garrick's own recitation, however, was not perfect, and Dr. Johnson used to tell him that he often mistook the emphatic word in a sentence. There was a line in *Hamlet*, the emphases of which he entirely misunderstood:

I will *speak* daggers, but *use* none.

Which he read:

I will speak *daggers*, but use *none*.

When Dr. Johnson requested him to read the Seventh Commandment, Garrick pronounced it, "Thou *shalt* not commit adultery." "You are wrong," said the Doctor, "it is a negative precept, and ought to be pronounced, 'Thou shalt *not* commit adultery.'" But Johnson himself was in error here, for the proper emphasis is: "Thou *shalt not* commit adultery;" for the command is not in opposition to a contrary command, which would have required the emphasis on the word *not* alone.

Dr. Taylor told Boswell another anecdote of Dr. Johnson's triumphing over his old pupil. Garrick and Giffard (also an actor) were called on to repeat the Ninth Commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Both tried it and both mistook the emphasis, which Johnson explained was on the *not* and *false witness*. Sheridan in his Lectures on the Art of Reading places the emphasis wholly on the word *false*; but neither he nor Johnson, I think, are quite right, because they both omit some emphases that are obviously required. Besides the emphasis on the word *not*, there should be an equal emphasis on the words *shalt not* and *false witness*: Thou *shalt not* bear *false witness* against thy neighbour. There is no direct opposition understood that would require an exclusive emphasis on *not* or *false*. Such an emphasis would not be less absurd than an emphasis on the word *no* in the Sixth Commandment: "Thou shalt commit *no* murder," instead of "Thou shalt commit *no murder*."

that he did not understand his own verses." Dr. Johnson himself was an indifferent reader. His recitation is said to have been at once monotonous and violent. We learn from Miss Seward that Walter Scott's reading was equally imperfect*: though Scott has praised hers very handsomely. "The tone of her voice," he says, "was melodious, guided by excellent taste, and well suited to reading and recitation, in which she willingly exercised it." Southey also speaks in high terms of her mode of reading. She tells Cary (the Translator of Dante) that he is almost the only poet she is acquainted with whose reading is entirely just to his Muse.

Byron is said to have read with feeling, but to have had a "Northumbrian burr in his speech." Campbell reads very like a Methodist parson. His *matter*, and the choice of his expressions, in a formal speech, are always worthy of the poet and the patriot; but his *manner* is a sad disappointment to his admirers. Those who are familiar with him as a poet, and have felt the magic of his fine eye and his sweet though somewhat restrained smile, could not easily conceive that he would injure the effect of noble sentiments by such an extremely disagreeable delivery.

Amongst the clergy of the Church of England there are many correct and impressive readers of the Scriptures; but when they descend from the pulpit they are too apt to bring its atmosphere along with them, and to turn a poem into a sermon. The Dissenters also, notwithstanding the many eloquent men amongst them, are generally still greater sinners in this respect, and in the most cheerful drawing-room make us fancy ourselves in a conventicle. There is a monotonous whine in their recitation of poetry that is perfectly intolerable. They regularly raise the voice

* Lockhart gives a very different account of Scott's mode of reading. "He read aloud high poetry with far greater simplicity, depth and effect than any other man I ever heard; and in Macbeth or Julius Cæsar, or the like, I doubt if Kemble could have been more impressive."—*Lockhart's Life of Scott.*

at the beginning of every line, and drop it into inaudible whispers at the close.

There are perhaps a greater number of good readers amongst actors than in any other profession. Mrs. Siddons used to be invited to read Shakspeare at Court*. Perhaps histrionic orators do not read other kinds of poetry so well as they read the Drama. They are too much inclined to *act*. Quin, however, was an exception. He is said to have read Milton with "marvellous propriety." Joseph Fawcett also was a beautiful general reader. *Hazlitt* tells us that his repeating some parts of Comus with his fine, deep, mellow-toned voice, particularly the lines, "I have oft heard my mother Circe, with the Syrens three," &c. and the enthusiatic comments he made afterwards, were a treat to the ear and to the soul. Henderson was a splendid reader; according to the testimony of Boaden his reading was superior to that of Kemble or Mrs. Siddons.

A good reader may even blind us to the faults of an author by the charm of his delivery. Spence, on the authority of Richardson, tells us that "Mr. Hooke read some speeches of his Roman History to the Speaker Onslow (who piqued himself upon his own reading), and begged him to give his opinion of the work: the Speaker answered in a passion, he could not tell what to think of it; it might be nonsense for aught he knew; for that his manner of reading had bewitched him."

* After Mrs. Siddons had retired from the stage, she gave public readings of poetry at the Argyle Rooms in London. It was observed that her reading of Shakspeare was far more effective than her reading of Milton. Mr. Campbell attributes this to the supposed circumstance that the poetry of Milton is too spiritual to be susceptible of any improvement from elocution. I confess that I do not agree with him. The glorious music of Milton must be doubly delightful when worthily expressed by that divinest of all instruments—the human voice. In the case of Mrs. Siddons, we are to recollect that that Queen of Actresses was on her own strong ground in dramatic poetry, and that the sympathies and associations of the audience were naturally most at her command, when she was uttering the words of Shakspeare.

It is said that Sir James Mackintosh was a fine reader; though from the harshness of his voice, I should not have supposed it. A respected friend of mine tells me that one day in a large party at Hydrabad, on some person depreciating Cowley, Sir James took down the book from a shelf in the room, and saying that he was sure the gentleman could not have sufficiently studied that poet, he read the "Chronicle" in a style that enchanted his audience. Perhaps his truth of emphasis and feeling overcame the disadvantage of a bad voice.

Though good poets are not *necessarily* good readers of verse, and I have given the names of several who illustrate the observation, I still think that the best readers amongst the poets must recite their own compositions or those of their brethren with a peculiar *gusto* and a magical effect. It is said that Virgil, Racine, and Boileau were admirable readers. Nat Lee was particularly distinguished for the beauty of his recitation. "He was so pathetic a reader of his own scenes," says Cibber, "that while he was reading to Major Mohun at a rehearsal, Mohun, in the warmth of his admiration, threw down his part, and said, 'unless I were able to play it as well as you read it, to what purpose should I undertake it?'"

Mr. De Quincy (the Opium Eater) gives an interesting account of Charles Lamb as a reader; and in speaking of his own habits, says, that at one period during illness he could not read to himself with any pleasure, yet that he sometimes read aloud for the pleasure of others, for reading was an *accomplishment* of his, "almost the only one he possessed," and if he was proud of any thing it was of this, because he had observed that no accomplishment was so rare. He describes Charles Lamb as a delightful reader of verse, though his style of recitation wanted force, and was better suited to passages of quiet or solemn movement than to those of tumultuous passion. But the management of his pauses, it is added, was judicious, his enunciation distinct, his tones me-

lodious, and his cadences well executed. This praise may excite some surprise, because it has been said that Lamb stammered even more in reading than in speaking. Amongst the best readers of modern times was Dr. Sayers, of whom William Taylor of Norwich has written such an affectionate and interesting biography. "Throughout life," says his biographer, "he was one of the finest readers ever heard; expression of every kind was at his command; his own emotion was always transitive, yet given with that subdued grace which is the expedient distinction between lecture and declamation." Mr. Polwhele (in his Traditions and Recollections) records that Dr. Wolcot (Peter Pindar) read poetry extremely well. He remembers the Doctor's reading some lines "with a voice so plaintively soft, so musical in its cadences, that his whole soul should seem to have been attuned to sensibility and virtue. But what a medley is man of good and evil!"

Wordsworth's reading of his own poetry is described by Hazlitt as particularly imposing. "In his favorite passages his eye beams with preternatural lustre, and the meaning labours slowly up from his swelling breast." Mrs. Hemans, in a letter to a friend, also gives a pleasing account of Wordsworth's style of recitation. "His reading is very peculiar, but, to my ear, delightful; slow, solemn, *earnest* in expression, more than any I have ever heard; when he reads or recites in the open air, his deep and rich tones seem to proceed from a spirit-voice, and to belong to the religion of the place, they harmonize so fitly with the thrilling tones of woods and waterfalls." Coleridge was also a fine reader. The reporter of the poet's Table Talk mentions that upon his telling him, that he did not very well recollect the Prothalamion of Spenser, "Then I must read you a bit of it," said Coleridge, and fetching the book from the next room, he recited the whole of it in his finest manner. "I particularly bear in mind," continues the reporter (the poet's relative), "the sensible diversity of tone and rhythm with which he gave the concluding line of each of the strophes of the poem:

Sweet Thames, run softly 'till I end my song.

Talfourd, in his life of Lamb, tells us that Coleridge was sometimes induced to recite portions of "Christabel," "then enshrined in manuscript from eyes profane;" and that he gave "a bewitching effect to its wizard lines." "But more peculiarly beautiful than this," continues Talfourd, "was his recitation of Kubla-Khan. As he repeated the passage—

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she play'd
Singing of Mount Abora—

his voice seemed to mount and melt into air as the images grew more visionary, and the suggested associations more remote."

Very little attention is paid at the generality of schools to accuracy and variety of emphasis and cadence. The consequence is that few persons, even amongst those who have received what is called an elegant education, are able to read either prose or verse with propriety and effect. Most readers hurry over the finest prose composition like a paragraph in a newspaper, as if they had no time to spare; or turn poetry into prose by a cold and careless intonation, or by harsh and erroneous accents. Faults in prose-reading, however, though more easily avoided, are far less disgusting than in the recitation of verse. Even so early as the time of Elizabeth, the poets used to complain of the manner in which their works were recited. Beaumont, in his lines to Fletcher on the failure of his "Faithful Shepherd," speaks with impatient contempt of bad readers of verse:

"Of those—
Whose very reading makes verse senseless prose."

The first and most important requisite for excellence in reading, is a thorough comprehension of the author's meaning; for unless we fully apprehend his sentiment or intention, it is impossible to give the right tone and cadence. The slightest error in these

respects has such a serious effect, that a writer is quite at the mercy of his reader. A greater punishment to a poet could hardly be conceived than that of making him listen to his own compositions inaccurately or untastefully recited*. I have never met with more than two or three individuals in private life who could read an ode or an elegy in a style that was not absolutely offensive.

The two most common though opposite faults in the reading of verse are a disregard of those fine harmonies which distinguish verse from prose, and a whine or sing-song. These are the Scylla and Charybdis of recitation. To avoid such serious dangers requires the nicest art—the utmost delicacy of taste. The reader who can succeed in this difficult task, and keep precisely the right tone, accent, and emphasis, and preserve at the same time an air of ease and freedom in the management of his voice, must be no ordinary person. Such excellence is not a mere mechanical accomplishment. It not only requires something of the perseverance of a Demosthenes, but many personal and intellectual qualities of a rare and brilliant order.

The rules for reading verse are so unsettled, that many points of considerable importance must be left entirely to the taste and feeling of the reciter. It is not, for instance, yet agreed amongst the teachers of elocution, whether or not a slight pause should be made at the end of every line of verse just sufficient to mark its limits. Dr. Lowth, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Blair and Mr. Sheridan are in favour of this pause; Walker and others are against it. I am inclined to agree with the former, that

* "I laugh heartily," says Owen Feltham (in his *Resolves*), "at Philoxenus's jest, who passing by and hearing some masons mis-sensing his lines, (with their ignorant sawing of them,) falls to breaking amain. They ask the cause, and he replies, they spoil his work, and he theirs. Certainly a worthy poet is so far from being a fool, that there is some wit required in him that shall be able to read him well; and without the true accent, numbered poetry does lose of the gloss. It was a speech becoming an able poet of our own, when a lord read his verses crookedly, and he beseeched his lordship not to murder him in his own lines, 'He that speaks false Latin breaks Priscian's head; but he that repeats a verse ill puts Homer out of joint.'"

there ought to be a very slight, and except to a fine ear, a scarcely perceptible pause of suspension at the end of every line, whether of rhymed or blank verse; but it should seem, if I may say so, more like a link than a break in the chain of harmony.

If any one is asked a second time to read aloud by any number of persons of good taste whom he has no reason to suppose are inclined to flatter him, he may congratulate himself upon the possession of a very rare and delightful accomplishment. For my own part I repeat, that I have heard very few persons in private life attempt to read poetry aloud who did not either irritate their auditors or lull them into an untimely slumber. I have met with many who could write good poetry, but very few who could read it properly. They who have been present at poetical readings in private parties know what a wearisome trial of courtesy it is to keep up an air of attention. The eyes begin to close in spite of one's politeness, and to make those "pictures when they're shut" of which Coleridge speaks; while like the waves on the sea-shore as described by Shelley, the reader's voice breathes over the slumbering brain a dull monotony. That Anna Seward deserved her reputation as a fine reader is sufficiently evident from the circumstance of her having been so frequently solicited to read Shakspeare aloud to different companies, that at last the task was beyond her strength. One evening, from reading all the principal scenes in Macbeth, she found herself so much injured that as she assured her friends, she never breathed freely afterwards.

Mr. Southey in the preface to his Madoc, in the new edition of his poems, has made the following complimentary mention of Miss Seward, with which I shall conclude the present article:—"Sir Walter Scott has estimated with characteristic skill Miss Seward's powers of criticism and her strong prepossessions on literary points. And believing that the more she was known the more she would have been esteemed and admired, I bear a willing testimony to her accomplishments and her genius, to her generous disposition, her frankness, her sincerity and warmth of heart."

SPRING.

The fresh and joyous Spring at length is seen,
And all things breathe of bliss. The youthful year
Hath burst the barriers time and tempest rear;
And clothed in vernal beauty, smiles serene
The quick-reviving earth. Though long hath been
The trance of Nature on the naked bier
Where ruthless Winter mocked her slumbers drear,
And rent with icy hand her robes of green,
At last 'tis brightly broken! Glossy trees,
Resplendent meads and variegated flowers,
Gleam in the sun, and tremble in the breeze!
And now with dreaming eye the poet sees
Fair shapes of pleasure haunt romantic bowers,
And laughing streamlets chase the flying hours!

SONNET—TO HEALTH.

Oh! I have sought thee over hill and plain,
In life's bright morn, with Temperance my guide,
And Hope and laughing Pleasure at my side,
Rose-cheeked Hygeia! And not all in vain
I wandered then o'er Nature's sweet domain,
For we have met where timid Dryads hide,
And where proud rivers in their glory glide
Beneath the summer sun. But care and pain
Have bound me now with adamantine chain;
Dark thoughts and images of death deride
My dearest dreams, my passions and my pride;
And, oh! no more, (so ruthless Fates ordain,)
These languid limbs the cheerful haunts shall gain,
Where thou and rural happiness abide!

ON PROSE MEMORANDA FOR POETICAL COMPOSITION.

Lord Byron made frequent poetical use of his own journals and letters. He sometimes even repeated the same thought in several different prose writings, and then finally enshrined it in immortal verse. In a letter to Mr. Murray, dated Diodati, Sept. 29, 1816, he says, "We have been to the Grindelwald, and the Jungfraw, and stood on the summit of the Wengen Alp, and seen torrents of nine hundred feet in fall, and glaciers of all dimensions: we have heard shepherds' pipes and avalanches, and looked on the clouds foaming up from the valley below us, *like the spray of the ocean of hell.*" In his journal, there is the following similar passage;—"Heard the avalanches falling *every five minutes* nearly. From whence we stood, on the Wengen Alp, we had all these in view on one side; on the other, the *clouds rose* from the opposite valley, *curling* up perpendicular precipices *like the foam from the ocean of hell.* It was *white and sulphury.*" These descriptions were at last reproduced in Manfred.

"*Ye avalanches,*————————
I hear ye *momently* above, beneath
Crash with a frequent conflict.
The mists boil up around the glaciers; *clouds*
Rise curling fast beneath me, *white and sulphury,*
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep hell."

I will give two further specimens—"Arrived at the Grindelwald; rode to the higher glacier—like a *frozen hurricane.*" * * * * * "Passed whole woods of *withered pines,* all withered; trunks stripped and *barkless, branchless,* lifeless; *done by a single winter.*"

"O'er the savage sea,
The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,
We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
The aspect of a tumbling *tempest's* foam
Frozen in a moment." *Manfred.*

"Like *blasted pines,*
Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless."
Ibid.

Dr. Johnson, a poet very different indeed from Byron, occasionally made use of prose notes in the preparation of his verses. The following rough hint or memorandum was used in his *Irene.*

"MAHOMET (to IRENE). I have tried thee, and joy to find that thou deservest to be loved by Mahomet,—with a mind great as his own. Sure thou art an error of nature, and an exception to the rest of thy sex, and art immortal; for sentiments like thine were never to sink into nothing. I thought all the thoughts of the fair had been to select the graces of the day, disclose the colours of the flaunting (flowing) robe, tune the voice and roll the eye, place the gem, choose the dress, and add new roses to the fading cheek, but—sparkling."

This passage is thus transformed into metre in the tragedy:

"Illustrious maid, new wonders fix me thine;
Thy soul completes the triumph of thy face;
I thought, forgive my fair, the noblest aim,
The strongest effort of a female soul
Was but to choose the graces of the day,
To tune the tongue, to teach the eyes to roll,
Dispose the colours of the flowing robe,
And add new roses to the fading cheek."

It is said that Pope's Essay on Criticism was first written out in prose by his own hand, and that the Essay on Man was versified after the original prose sketch, furnished to the poet by his "guide, philosopher, and friend," Lord Bolingbroke. A similar practice is recommended by Vida in his Art of Poetry; and Warton tells us, that when Racine had fixed on a subject for a play, he wrote down in plain prose, not only the subject of each of the five acts, but of every speech. When he had done this to his satisfaction,

he used to say, " My tragedy is finished." Moore observes that it was much the same case with Sheridan, who, whenever he undertook any subject in verse, used to write down his thoughts first in a sort of poetical prose, with here and there a rhyme or metrical line as they might occur, and afterwards reduce, with much labour, " this anomalous compound" to regular poetry. A practice of this nature, however, should not be too generally adopted in poetical composition. It may be very advisable in some particular kinds of poetry, such as the didactic, and the descriptive; but in those compositions which require quick bursts of passion, or " thoughts that breathe, and words that burn," there is something uncongenial and chilling in so mechanical an operation, and in the very nature of mere prose itself. The music of verse, the beauty of those expressions usually connected with poetical associations, and the elevation or abstraction of mind which is required in the production of poetry with all its proper adjuncts, excite the imagination and preserve it in the requisite state of activity and fervour. The mere difficulties of versification, are by no means so great as is generally supposed, when the poet is in a favorable mood. Pope has confessed that he often found one couplet suggest another. We have also the authority of Milton, for saying, that there are certain " thoughts that voluntarily move harmonious numbers." In descriptive poetry, however, especially, where minute and quickly changing appearances are to be preserved, and the memory is apt to be unfaithful, the practice of taking prose notes from the book of nature is, perhaps, both justifiable and judicious. It is analogous to the practice of a sister art. Studies from Nature are thought no deduction from a painter's supposed power of imagination or facility of execution.

STANZAS.

I.

Oh ! deem not that my heart is cold,
Though 'mid the social throng
I silent sit, as if controlled
By some deep sense of wrong ;
It is not that the voice of mirth
Sounds harshly in mine ear,
Nor that my soul denies the worth
Of Friendship's smile sincere :—

II.

But oft upon my sunniest hour
A fitful sadness falls,
And shades prophetic round me lour,
'Till every scene appals.
I could not tell thee whence or why
Comes this o'erwhelming change,
That makes what else might charm mine eye
Seem desolate and strange.

III.

As sometimes o'er the brightest day
The sudden shadows sail,
So dreams of darkness and dismay
O'er Life's best hopes prevail.
I see such mystic visions now,
And tremble at my fears,—
Oh ! then, forgive my clouded brow,
My silence and my tears !

ON FRIENDSHIP.

"Of all the heavenly gifts, that mortal men commend,
What trusty treasure in the world can countervail a friend?"

*Nicholas Grimoald**.

"In the morning, after the priest had given him the last sacraments, he said—'there is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship; and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue.'"

Spence's Anecdotes of Pope.

"Oh! what a rare thing is a friend! How true is that old saying; that the use of a friend is more pleasing and necessary than the elements of fire and water."

Montaigne.

"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel."

Shakspeare.

Most men flatter themselves that they are not only capable of friendship, but that they have many friends. To a superficial observer, human life appears to abound in friendships; but it presents a very different aspect to those who can penetrate beneath the surface. "Friendship is so rare," observes Sir Philip Sidney, "that it is almost doubtful, whether it is a thing indeed, or a mere word." Poets and moralists have concurred in eulogising its advantages, and lamenting its uncertainty. A familiar anecdote on the subject has been versified by Cowper:

"Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe
Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and over-awed
Lest he should trespass, begged to go abroad.
Go fellow! whither?—turning short about—
Nay. Stay at home—you're always going out.

* An old English Poet—the second writer of blank-verse after Surrey. He flourished in the early part of the 16th century.

'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end.
For what?—An please your sir, to see a friend.
A friend! Horatio cried, and seemed to start—
Yea, marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.
And fetch my cloak; for, though the night be raw,
I'll see him too—*the first I ever saw!*"

"It is with friends as with ghosts," says Rochefoucault; "things that every body talks of, and scarcely any hath seen."

But, however rare may be real friendship, men are so little formed to live alone, that when they cannot grasp its substance, they love to cheat themselves with its shadow. They who have the fewest friends have often the most acquaintances. The latter are a kind of proxies for the former, and usually bear the same name, though they are really of a very different character. Perhaps faith in some matters is less involuntary than philosophers have supposed; as nothing seems more common than for men to believe according to their wishes, and to reject what is opposed to their vanity or their interest. Thus we frequently find a person of shrewdness and good sense congratulating himself on a long list of supposed friends, who in reality, are heartless and selfish beings, whose characters are as clear as daylight to all the rest of the world. Men protect themselves from the fear of infidelity in friendship, and the horror of discovering that they are alone in the world, by a voluntary blindness. The greatest optimist in friendship is indisposed to put the truth and constancy of his friends to a very severe trial. He dreads to be undeceived. It is generally considered a very dangerous thing to borrow money from a friend, or to rival him in love or fame. That which is commonly called friendship would not stand the test. Goldsmith's story of Alcander and Septimius, in which one friend resigns the hand of his mistress to the other, with such a magnanimous self-sacrifice, is a pretty romance, but has no counterpart in common life.

Mr. Landor in his "Imaginary Conversations" makes Cicero thus express himself—"Could I begin my existence again, and

what is equally impossible, could I see before me all I have seen, I would have few acquaintances, fewer friendships, no familiarities. This rubbish, for such it generally is, collecting at the base of an elevated mind, lessens its height and impairs its character." There is no doubt that the being linked by the mere forms and courtesies of society to a very extensive circle, must be injurious alike to a man's ease, purity, and independence. He has too many different opinions to study, and too many tastes to satisfy, to be able to indulge his own particular impulses. Instead of standing out boldly and prominently as an individual, he becomes only an insignificant part of the great mass, and is whirled away like a mere straw, amidst the general refuse that soils the stream of life. A man of eminent intellectual and moral worth cannot long mingle harmoniously with the crowd without a sacrifice of character. The delicate bloom of virtue is soon rubbed off by a close contact with the world, and the finest thoughts and speculations are exchanged for more vulgar and sordid interests. Unless a man lowers himself to the level of those about him by unworthy compliances, he is regarded with a jealous eye. His superiority is a tacit censure on the rest of the world. They call his integrity churlishness, and his genius eccentricity. "Great wit," especially of that kind which renders a man unfit to mingle with the throng, is always held to be very "nearly allied to madness." He who mixes with the world, and yet endeavours to breast the stream of popular opinion, is considered more odd than wise. Thus a man who has many friends has generally very few worth having, nor does he deserve to have better ones; for it is only by a dishonorable flexibility in his own character that he can surround himself with a host of intimates, all differing more or less from himself, and from each other. The friendship that is of any value consists in a close communion of mind, as well as heart, and such is the selfishness of most men, the inequality of human capacities, and the endless variety of dispositions, that

nothing is so rare as the union of congenial spirits. A man may pass through a long life without meeting with one companion, into whose breast he could safely pour the secrets of his soul, or from whom he might expect a perfect and disinterested sympathy. Montaigne has some excellent observations on the rarity of friendship, and relates the anecdote of a young soldier, who, when asked by Cyrus, what he would take for a horse with which he had just won the prize at a race, and whether he would exchange him for a kingdom, replied, "No, truly, sir; but I would freely part with him to gain a *friend*, could I find a man worthy of such a relation." When Socrates was asked why he had built so small a house—"Small as it is," he replied, "I wish I had friends enough to fill it."

Rochefoucault, who studied human nature closely, observed, that in the misfortunes of our best friends we always find something that does not displease us. Swift has confirmed the truth of this maxim, and has illustrated it by his verses on his own death, in which he anticipates the observations of his surviving friends with great sagacity and a caustic humour. To those who neither analyze their own feelings, nor dive into the hearts of others, this view of human nature may seem as untrue as it is shocking. They perceive not with what eager and indecent haste unhappy intelligence is communicated by *friends*, and how transparent is the veil of sadness that is worn on such occasions. A keen eye may often detect an ill-suppressed smile beneath it, like the sunlight behind an April cloud. I have seen instances in which it has broken out into actual laughter. People are sometimes heard to express a sense of horror at their own indifference to the afflictions of their friends, and half-conscious of a strange internal pleasure, are unable to account for it. It is truly said, that the most difficult of all knowledge is the knowledge of our own hearts. This secret satisfaction arising from the distresses of others is owing to the sense of superior fortune, increased

by contrast, and not to any natural malignity of disposition, as might be superficially imagined. All happiness is comparative, and we measure our own lot by that of others. This view of the subject in some degree blunts the edge of Rochefoucault's remark, which would otherwise seem a terrible sarcasm against human nature. ' To enable us to overcome the disposition to congratulate ourselves on our own good fortune at the expense of others, our friendship must be strong indeed. Those who think they have *many* friends of such truth and fervour indulge in a very gross delusion.

A gentleman once gave me a few odd pages, which he got by mere accident, of a work entitled "*The Journal of a Self-Observer*," being the diary of the inmost thoughts and feelings of the celebrated Lavater, a keen student of his own heart and the hearts of others. The Journal was not originally intended for publication. "Lest I should deceive myself," says the author, "I will make a firm resolution never to show these remarks to any person whatever." And he undertakes to put down every thing as truly and as carefully as if he had to read the Journal to his God. The following passage may be given as a specimen of his confessions (more genuine than those of Rousseau), and as a curious evidence of his severe and searching self-study. The book would have delighted Rochefoucault.

"*Sunday, January the seventh.*—When I awoke, a messenger was waiting for me, delivering a letter from my friend ***, at H——, who entreated me to pay him a visit, if possible, for he was very ill.

"I was frightened, and yet this intelligence *had something pleasing in it*, though, God knows! I love my friend sincerely; his death would grieve me much. *It is not the first time that my fright occasioned by afflicting intelligence, seemed to be mixed with secret joy.* I recollect to have felt once on a sudden alarm of fire, something so very pleasing, that, on cool reflection, makes me shudder. Was this sensation the effect of the novelty, and the suddenness of the alarm, or of the presentiment of *the concern which those with whom I should have an opportunity of conversing on that incident would show, and which is always somewhat flattering to the*

narrator? Or was it the effect of the confused idea of the changes which interrupted the sameness of my thoughts or occupations? Or was it, which is most likely, the consequence of *the joyful sensation of being exempted from the misfortune which befalls or threatens others?*

"I should like to know what passes in the minds of other people, and particularly of those who have an humane, feeling heart, when they are surprised by important, and, at the same time, afflicting intelligence. However, I apprehend that most of them either do not pay proper attention to situations of that kind, or are anxious to hide their feelings from others, and, perhaps from themselves. Yet, I think, one ought to observe one's self with the utmost care in such cases; and, in order to recollect afterwards, to one's own benefit, the most secret emotions of the mind, one ought to commit them faithfully to writing in the first tranquil moment.

"I communicated the letter to my wife, made preparation for my journey, settled in haste some business, gave some orders, and then stepped into the carriage.

"Consternation, anxiety, uneasiness, *and a secret satisfaction, on account of the joy my speedy arrival would afford my friend, but not only on account of that joy, but also of the praise which I expected himself and his family would give me—and shame on account of that satisfaction*, succeeded each other, alternately, in the first quarter of an hour*.

"I began to pray: 'O! my God! how irregular and impure are my thoughts! When will my heart be in such a condition that I shall be able to look upon myself without blushing!—Merciful God! guide my thoughts and sensations, particularly at present.'"

Real friendship is almost as exclusive as love, and cannot be diffused over a large circle. I can hardly call that man my friend who cares as much for a hundred other people as he does for me. I am not satisfied with a hundredth share of his heart. He might as well pretend to love as many mistresses. He cannot have an equally deep feeling for them all. In the event of a contrariety of interests amongst them, how is he to act? Every body's friend is no one's. Jealousy is almost as much allied to friendship as to love, and it is more natural to see friends in pairs than in triads or in scores. The close communion of a great number of people is sociality, but not friendship.

* These are genuine confessions, and show a profound self-knowledge.

Some people talk of friendship as if it were as common a thing as the sexual affection, which is by no means the case. All men at some period of their lives have been fired by the latter passion, but comparatively very few of any age have felt the force of genuine friendship. Love is a compound feeling, and is fed with the grossest food; but friendship is a passion which must exist entirely on a moral or intellectual diet. Though love is more fiery and ardent, it is also more fickle and uncertain. It is subject, as are all physical passions, to a fatal satiety. It is destroyed by fruition. But the appetite of friendship grows with what it feeds on. Love is like a hunter who cares not for the game when once caught, which he may have pursued with the most intense and breathless eagerness. Love is strongest in pursuit, friendship in possession.

The ancient philosophers were enthusiastic advocates of friendship, and amongst the Greeks it was made a point of religion and legislation. But Christianity has been thought by some to nullify this virtue. Soame Jenyns, in his " View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion," maintains, that it is not consistent with that universal benevolence which is inculcated by the Scriptures*. Dr. Johnson seems to lean to the same opinion, and Shaftesbury in his " Characteristics" insists that private friendship is a virtue purely voluntary in a Christian. He supports his argument with an extract from Bishop Taylor, who observes that the word friendship, in the sense commonly understood by it, is not so much as mentioned in the New Testament†.

* " It is totally incompatible," he observes, " with the genius and spirit of the Gospel." Melmoth in his remarks on Cicero's *Lælius* warmly combats this notion.

† But Bishop Heber (who by the way, wrote a Life of Bishop Taylor) made the following remark in a letter to Mr. Hornby : " Whatever may be our prospects of intercourse here, I am not one of those who apprehend that a well-grounded esteem even for earthly beings, will perish with the present world ; and I trust I am not presumptuous in cherishing the hope, that many of the friendships begun here, may be among the sources of our everlasting happiness."

Boswell records the following conversation on this subject between Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Knowles (a Quaker lady).

Johnson: "All friendship is preferring the interest of a friend to the neglect or perhaps against the interest of others; so that an old Greek said, 'he that has *friends* has *no friend*.' Now Christianity recommends universal benevolence, to consider all men as our brethren; which is contrary to the virtue of friendship, as described by the ancient philosophers. Surely, madam, your sect must approve of this; for you call all men *friends*." *Mrs. Knowles:* "We are commanded to do good to all men, but especially to them that are of the household of faith!" *Johnson:* "Well, madam, the household of faith is wide enough." *Mrs. Knowles:* "But, Doctor, our Saviour had twelve Apostles, yet there was *one* whom he *loved*. John was called the disciple whom Jesus loved!" *Johnson:* (with eyes sparkling benignantly,) "Very well, indeed, madam. You have said very well." *Boswell:* "A fine application. Pray sir, had you ever thought of it?" *Johnson:* "I had not, sir."

But though there is certainly a spirit of exclusiveness in friendship itself, it does not follow that it is necessarily opposed to that universal philanthropy which is so incessantly and so beautifully recommended by the Christian religion. To entertain exactly the same esteem and love for all men is utterly impossible, because we esteem and love individuals for qualities with which all men are not equally endowed. There are also natural instincts which interfere with this equality of regard. Every mother must prefer the interest of her own offspring to that of others. All that can be expected from us is, the cultivation of a spirit of charity and good-will towards the whole human race; and they who are capable of an intense and passionate friendship cannot be cruel or cold-hearted towards any portion of their fellow-creatures. In fact, in the composition of a genuine friendship there are many of the highest and most generous virtues. A merely selfish man cannot be a friend, neither can an evil-minded or a foolish one. Voltaire defines friendship "a tacit contract between two sensible and virtuous persons." "The wicked," he says, "have only accomplices; the voluptuous, companions; the interested, asso-

ciates; idle men, connexions; and princes, courtiers. Cethegus," he adds, "was the accomplice of Cataline. and Mæcenas, the courtier of Octavius; but Cicero was the *friend* of Atticus."

There are many delightful examples of literary friendship. Perhaps one reason of the fervour of friendship between men of letters is their facility of mental intercourse. They are in the habit of clothing their most subtle thoughts and associations in a transparent diction. The communion of such men is perfect, and the intense delight with which they compare minds, and kindle at the social collision of their most secret conceptions, is inconceivable by ordinary persons. Their mental characters are more firmly fixed, and their opinions are not liable to be affected by the breath of frivolous scandal or by slight external occurrences. They live as it were in a world of their own, in which there are fewer mutabilities than in the material world with which other men are connected. They do not care for the idle gossip of society. Their conversation is about departed spirits, and is full of glorious abstractions. They are hand and glove with Milton and Shakspeare, with Bacon and with Newton, while they have not even a bowing acquaintance with their next-door neighbour. How beautiful an instance of literary friendship is that of Beaumont and Fletcher, whose labours were so mingled, that no critic has been able to separate them! Their union is eternal! It is scarcely necessary to allude to the friendship of Virgil and Horace, Petrarch and Boccacio, Chaucer and Gower, Surrey and Wyatt, Milton and Marvel, Cowley and Harvey, Isaac Walton and Charles Cotton, Lloyd and Churchill, Pope and Swift, and Byron and Moore. Of these interesting literary friendships almost every one must have read. How touchingly has Gray commemorated his affection for West, in the following Sonnet.

"In vain to me the smiling morning shines,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.

These ears, alas, for other notes repine;
 A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
 And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
 To warm their little loves the birds complain,
I fruitless mourn for him that cannot hear,
 And weep the more because I weep in vain."

The friendship of Montaigne and Stephen de Boetius was such as is rarely known in ordinary life,—" a friendship so entire, and so perfect, that certainly the like is hardly to be found in story." Nothing can exceed the passionate and disinterested tenderness with which they regarded each other. After the death of Boetius, of which his friend has given us so pathetic a relation, life seemed " one dark tedious night" to the survivor. " From the day that I lost him," says Montaigne, " I have only languished in life, and the very pleasures that present themselves to me, instead of comforting me, double my affliction for the loss of him. We were half-sharers in every thing; *and methinks, by outliving him, I defraud him of his share.*" This approaches nearly to Dryden's somewhat extravagant description of friendship in his " All for Love."

' I was his soul: he lived not but in me;
We were so closed within each other's breast,
The rivets were not found that joined us first;
That does not reach us yet; we were so mixed,
As meeting streams, both to ourselves were lost:
We were one mass: we could not give nor take,
But from the same; for he was I, I he.
* * * * *
If I have any joy when thou art absent,
I grudge it to myself; *methinks I rob
Thee of thy part.*"

Young puts the loss of a friend in a still stronger light:

> "When friends part
> 'Tis the survivor dies."

It is this kind of social intercourse which is described by Seneca. "Friendship," says he, "lays all things common, and nothing can be good to the one that is ill to the other. I do not speak of such a community as to destroy one another's propriety; but as the father and mother have two childern, not one a piece, but each of them two." When we consider what are the real claims of friendship, and look around us in the world in search of a true friend, we may well despair of success. He who has one such treasure may think himself supremely fortunate. Ordinary connections in society are merely supported by an interchange of interests, which is interrupted at the first inequality. This commerce of benefits is attended with as much selfishness and mean arithmetic on both sides as the negociations of the lowest traders. It resolves itself into the simple question of profit and loss. The general craving for society and intolerance of solitude is not so much traceable to a spirit of sociality as to an uneasy vacancy of mind, and the absence of internal and independent sources of amusement. Most men are anxious to escape from their own thoughts, and dread the dulness of a self-conversation. They find their own company insupportable, and are sometimes compelled to fly for relief even to those whom they despise. Thus, "kings," as Burke says, "are fond of low company," because in such society they can best forget their own wearisome identity, and throw off that uneasy weight of satiety and care which is peculiar to their isolated condition. The friendship which seems so abundant in general society is a sad illusion, and nothing can be more contradictory and absurd than the manner in which the mass of people speak, in their absence, of those whom they call their friends. They should ask themselves how far they would be ready to sacrifice their own immediate interest for the benefit of

these dear associates. If the life of one of them depended on an expensive voyage that was beyond his means, would they pay the cost? If he were to die, would it deprive them of any portion of their usual appetite or sleep? "Not a jot!" Dr. Johnson, who was at least as capable of the virtue of friendship as the generality of men, has very candidly confessed the small extent of his own sympathy in the fate of others. If he had not the requisite fervour and disinterestedness of genuine friendship, he was at all events no hypocrite, and was equally willing to read his own heart, and to lay it open to the gaze of others. When he was asked, what his feelings would be if one of his friends were apprehended for an offence for which he might be hanged: he replied, "I should do what I could to bail him, and give him any other assistance; but if he were once fairly hanged I should not suffer." "Would you eat your dinner that day, sir?" inquired Boswell. "Yes, sir; and eat it as if he were eating with me. Why, there's Baretti, who is to be tried for his life to-morrow; friends have risen up for him on all sides; yet if he should be hanged, none of them will eat a slice of plum-pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind." This seems a disheartening account of human nature; but I am afraid it is the true one. Those who have more sympathy for their fellows are perhaps but rare exceptions to the general character of mankind. Dr. Johnson, cursed as he was with a hypochondriacal temperament, had a deep sense of the necessity of friendship. After the loss of many friends, whose praise he valued, he makes a touching allusion to his desolate condition, in the preface to his Dictionary. "I may surely," says he, "be contented without the praise of perfection, which if I could obtain in this *gloom of solitude*, what would it avail me?" But the death of friends made little impression upon him when he had the means of supplying their place with other associates. He used to talk of the necessity of *repairing* his friendships with new

acquaintances, a cold and mechanical notion, which shows how little he understood of the depth, and holiness, and continuity of a true affection*. His friendship was selfish and one-sided. He was merely his own friend The loss of a friend who deserves the name is utterly irreparable. It is a terrible laceration of the heart which never heals.

> "Thy last sigh
> Dissolved the charm, the disenchanted earth
> Lost all her lustre!"

There is nothing which throws so dark a horror over death as the parting with a dear friend, and the dreadful thought that we may never meet again, even in a future state is almost insupportable The great and awful change which must take place in our nature may annihilate the materials of friendship

* It must be remembered however, that even Cicero in his Essay on Friendship recommends us to repair the loss of old friends by new acquisitions. And Shenstone acknowledges that it was a maxim with him that whenever he lost a person's friendship to engage a fresh friend in his place But it is not so easy to engage a friend as you would a servant, just as you require him There is a pleasant stanza on this subject in Don Juan

> O Job! you had two friends one's quite enough,
> Especially when we are ill at ease
> They are but bad pilots when the weather's rough
> Doctors less famous for their cures than fees
> Let no man grumble when his friends fall off,
> As they will do like leaves at the first breeze
> When your affairs come round one way or t'other,
> Go to the Coffee House and take another"

The Poet, however, adds in the succeeding stanza—

> "But this is not my maxim had it been,
> Some heart-aches had been spared me"

The thought of going to a Coffee House for a new friend was suggested to Lord Byron by a passage in Swift's or Walpole's letters, he did not remember which, where it is mentioned that somebody regretting the loss of a friend was answered, 'When I lose one, I go to the St. James's Coffee House, and take another"

The ancients carried more of this world into their idea of a future state than we do, and cheered their last hours with the hope of again meeting those they loved with much the same personal feeling as that with which they parted. Modern philosophy is on this point perhaps more refined; but while it renders our future prospect less palpable, it is also less congenial to human associations.

STANZAS TO ——

(ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE, A FEW MONTHS AFTER MARRIAGE.)

I.

A GLOOM hath gathered round thee now that will not pass away,
Like gray mist from the mountain's peak, or storms from April's
day;
There is a shade upon thy brow, a tempest in thy soul,
No ray of earthly hope can cheer, no mortal voice control.

For she, the charm, the life of life, hath vanished from the scene,
And thou art left to mourn in vain how brief her sway hath been;—
Alas! too, like a meteor fair from some celestial clime,
That bright but transient vision touched the dusky wings of Time!

III.

Thy path is lone and desolate, and grief shall haunt thy breast,
Yet sometimes dreams of happier realms where weary pilgrims rest,
May flash upon thine upward gaze, and bid thy spirit soar
Where friends and lovers severed long, shall meet to part no more!

LINES WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

LADY—though no poetic fire
Breathe in my verse—no Muse inspire
My soul with that resplendent lore
That glitters in the page of MOORE—
With WORDSWORTH'S sentiment profound—
Or BYRON'S storm of thought and sound—
Or classic CAMPBELL'S patriot glow—
Or SCOTT'S free strain, whose numbers flow
As wildly as the wandering rills
'Mid Scotia's proud romantic hills—
The state, the tenderness, and power
Of SOUTHEY in his happier hour—
The gentle truth, and visions bold,
Of him* the "*Tale of Love*" that told—
Or SHELLEY'S wilderness of dreams,
His thunder-clouds, and meteor-gleams,—
Though powers like these alone are given
To spirits touched with light from heaven,
Who seem upon this earth to wave
Celestial wands—and thousands crave
A spark of their immortal flame
To cheer them on the path of fame,
Yet crave in vain—and 'mid the throng
E'en I have dared an idle song,—
Though barren rhymes my labours raise,
Poor shrubs on which the sun of praise

* Coleridge.

But seldom beams,—I do not fear
Fair LADY! thine indulgent ear;
For promptly at thy soft command—
And who could check his heart or hand
At beauty's call?—I've framed a lay
Whose sound perchance some future day
May bid thee hail with kind regard
The memory of thy friend and bard.

But turning to my task and theme.
What rays of glory round me stream!
The dazzling gems these leaves enclose—
The various spells that genius throws
On every page—the flowerets rare
Transplanted in this bright parterre—
Strike dumb the faint descriptive Muse,
As sun-beams mock the painter's hues;—
Nor need these simple verses tell
The hand of Taste hath chosen well.
